

The Women Musicians of  
South Place Ethical Society,  
1887 – 1927

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## Abstract

Conway Hall Ethical Society (known as South Place Ethical Society until 2012) has been a prominent home for radical thinking in London since it was established in 1793 as a dissenting congregation.<sup>1</sup> Both music and feminism have been central to the Society's past, but their significance in this context in previous academic literature has been vastly overlooked. The years between 1887 and 1927 were host to tumultuous change at the Society when it went through a significant change in leadership and made the official departure from being a religious organisation to joining the ethical movement. At the same time, rapid developments in women's equality occurred across the country as the fight for women's suffrage became one of the most important political issues of the time. This was also a period that witnessed a vibrant music scene in London as more and more people had the opportunity to engage with performance, concerts and music education; this included young British women who were beginning to challenge the limited expectations of musical women's careers, which had been ingrained over many centuries of a patriarchal music scene.

This thesis explores how these developments in British culture and politics were manifested in a society that had already established itself as an important organisation in London for progressive thinking and action. It is achieved through a focus on the women musicians who were part of the Society's activities in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, with comparisons to their presence at other musical establishments. Particular attention is paid to three women, Jessie Grimson, Edith Swepstone and Josephine Troup, who between them represent some of the diverse experiences that musical women found within the South Place Chapel during this period. Each of their careers was profoundly affected by their association with the Society. This thesis also presents a significant amount of unstudied music from the ethical movement's history and the output of women musicians. Drawing on previous unstudied and newly discovered archival material at Conway Hall and elsewhere, this thesis also contributes to existing understanding about the intersection of music and

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<sup>1</sup> The Society has existed under many names, as will be explained in Chapter 3. As the majority of this thesis refers to the period of time when it was known as South Place Ethical Society, this is the name that shall be used throughout the thesis. Exceptions occur in passages that refer to activities occurring at the Society whilst this thesis was being developed.

feminism at the turn of the twentieth century. This results in better knowledge about how the ethical movement's engagement with music and the advancement of women's rights had a wider influence on British society.

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## List of Abbreviations

BHA – British Humanist Archive  
BL – British Library  
BMO – Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra  
CDA – Collaborative Doctoral Award  
CHES - Conway Hall Ethical Society  
GSM – Guildhall School of Music  
LMA – London Metropolitan Archives  
LSO – London Symphony Orchestra  
NYES – New York Ethical Society  
PCS – People’s Concert Society  
PES – People’s Entertainment Society  
RAM – Royal Academy of Music  
RCM – Royal College of Music  
SPES – South Place Ethical Society  
SPSPC – South Place Sunday Popular Concerts  
SWM – Society of Women Musicians  
WLES – West London Ethical Society

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## Preface

This thesis is an outcome of a Collaborative Doctoral Award (CDA) working with Conway Hall Ethical Society (known as South Place Ethical Society until 2012). The Society currently describes itself as an educational charity and is thought to be the oldest surviving free thought organisation in the world. The Society states its main objectives as ‘the advancement of study, research and education in humanist ethical principles’.<sup>2</sup> It is a member of the European Humanist Federation and the International Humanist and Ethical Union, with a library that contains the largest and most comprehensive research resources related to humanism in the UK. Conway Hall continues to host a wide range of activities for members and non-members, including its tradition of lectures, debates, educational courses and music. The Society is currently working to expand its digital archive. In September 2017 Conway Hall successfully bid for £88,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund to fund a new project, *Victorian Blogging – The Pamphleteers Who Dared to Dream of a Better World*, which will enable open online access to over 1300 nineteenth-century pamphlets showing contemporary perspectives on issues such as free thought, secularism, gender and politics. Other researchers have been working with the archive, and volunteers at the library are continuing to sort through material that has not yet been catalogued. Subsequently, the research for this thesis into the Society’s history will complement and engage with other projects at Conway Hall through a mutual ambition to understand more about the Society’s history and will hopefully be of use to future researchers with similar aims.

Due to the nature of the CDA, there have been outcomes from this research outside of academic writing. At the beginning of the research, it became apparent that a significant amount of the musical holdings of the archive were missing. Crucially, this included the majority of the first forty years of concert programmes that were initially planned to be at the core of the research. Consequently, a considerable amount of time was spent looking for the programmes. After a thorough search at Conway Hall, I began searching for copies of the programmes in other locations. Some were found out of sequence in various libraries across the UK, in locations such as the British

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<sup>2</sup> Anon. *Ethical Record*, 123, no.4, (October – December 2018), 5.

Library, the Royal College of Music, the Weston Library (Oxford) and the Brotherton Library (Leeds). In the meantime, I started to build up a picture of the concert programmes using a combination of sources – mostly through newspapers and annual reports. It was after two years of this work that the original programmes were eventually found. This was as a result of noticing footnotes in Alan Bartley's book *Far From the Fashionable Crowd*, in which he referenced some of the missing programmes and I contacted him to find out where he had seen the sources. It transpired that many years ago, a member of the Society had removed the programmes from the archive without permission as an act of preservation during some difficult years at the Society. Although the intentions were good, the documents were later passed on to someone else and subsequently became hard to trace. Whilst it would have been useful to track down these programmes earlier in the process, saving a substantial amount of extra work, it is a positive result of this project that the majority of the concert programme archive is now complete at Conway Hall. Sadly, there are still a few missing programmes, including the full and original copy of the 'Concert of Women Composers' – probably the most important programme in the context of this project.

Other results of the project have included two pre-concert talks given before the Conway Hall Sunday Concerts, and an exhibition that was displayed in the library from January – March 2017. A blog has also been kept up on the Conway Hall website with updates on progress with the research, and as guest editor I wrote a short article for the opening page of the *Ethical Record* in January 2018. Arguably one of the most important outcomes of the project has been a concert that was given at Conway Hall in June 2018 based on the findings of the research. The concert was given in the old early-twentieth-century format of the South Place Sunday Popular Concerts, and consisted of only works by women that featured in the concerts in the first forty years. For many of the pieces it was a rare opportunity for them to be performed, particularly in the current home of the Ethical Society. The programme consisted of:

Alice Verne-Bredt (1864 – 1958) – *Phantasie Trio*

Liza Lehmann (1862 – 1918) – *Myself When Young*

Maude Valérie White (1855 – 1937) – *King Charles Cavalier Song*

Edith Swepstone (1862 – 1942) – *Spectral Hunt*

Josephine Troup (1853 – 1913) – *Kleines Wiegenlied*

Amy Grimson (1872 – 1935) – *Canzona*

Interval

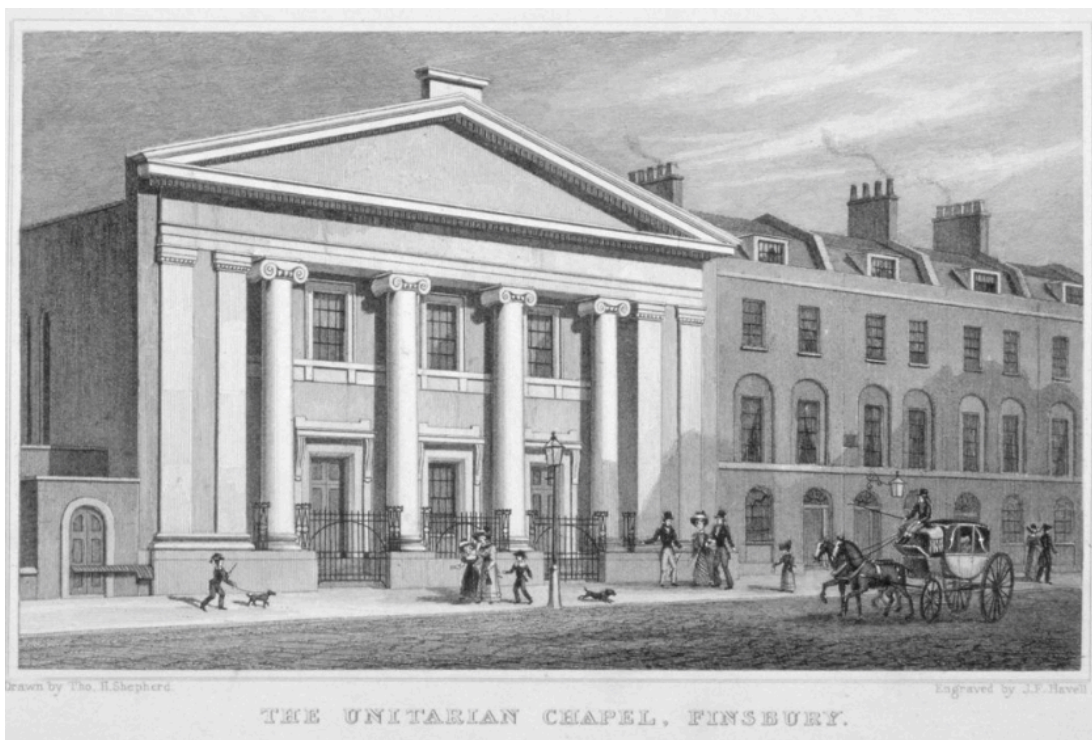
Ethel Smyth (1858 – 1944) – *E Minor String Quartet*

The programme notes gave descriptions of the music in the context of their original performance. An especially pleasant outcome of the concerts was that the performers commented on their enjoyment of performing an unusual programme, and cellist Gabriella Swallow said to the audience that she planned to perform Amy Grimson's *Canzona* at future concerts. Personally, having the music performed, listened to and talked about has been one of the most worthwhile and enjoyable parts of the project and I am extremely grateful to Conway Hall for the opportunity to make it happen.

Image 1 - South Place Chapel interior (1887 - 1927)



Image 2 - South Place Chapel exterior (1887 - 1927)



## Chapter 1. Introduction

### **1.1 Introduction**

Although there are a number of histories written about the history of Conway Hall Ethical Society, so far most of them have followed a similar narrative. The aim of this thesis is to provide a more specific account of an aspect of the Society's history that has so far been neglected – the women musicians of its past. The South Place Sunday Popular Concerts (SPSPCs), started in 1887, now known as the 'Conway Hall Sunday Concerts', are recognised as the longest running chamber music series in Europe, but there have been few detailed explorations of their significance. It is widely acknowledged that Conway Hall Ethical Society played a significant part in London's late nineteenth and early twentieth-century musical history. In one of the only recently written and thorough accounts of the concerts, Alan Bartley concluded that a more in-depth look at the concerts' history was needed.<sup>3</sup> Whilst the concerts are, and always have been, an important part of the Society's musical past, music was also prominent in other aspects of the Society's life. Furthermore, despite the popularity of the ethical movement throughout Britain during this period and the central role that music played, there has been no academic study on this topic as yet. Therefore, an important outcome of this thesis is an exploration of what value music had to the temporary success of the ethical movement and to its members. This will primarily be done through a detailed account of the South Place Ethical Society, although other societies in London and beyond have been considered.

In order to gain a more in-depth understanding about music in the ethical societies, rather than to achieve another comprehensive overview, the study will focus on the women musicians of this period, examined through case studies. Many reasons led to this decision, aside from the influence of the increasing media interest regarding music and women, both historical and contemporary. As far back as 1924, Hypatia Bradlaugh-Bonner (1858 – 1953), the British activist and daughter of Charles Bradlaugh, publicly acknowledged the lack of recognition for women's participation at South Place. This topic has subsequently been revisited, once by Nicolas Walter in

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<sup>3</sup> Bartley, Alan. "Chamber concerts in suburban London, 1895 – 1915: aspects of repertoire, performance and reception." PhD diss., Oxford Brookes University: 2004, 175 – 6.



1993 during a lecture at South Place where he highlighted some of the important roles that women have played in the Society in the past, including the musical contributions of Sarah Flower Adams and Josephine Troup. His short speech regarding this topic concluded with the slightly shocking fact that no woman became an Appointed Lecturer at the Society before 1986, and the following statement: 'Much of the essential but unrecorded work here has always been done by women. Putting an apparently trivial but actually serious question, who has done most of the cooking and cleaning here (as elsewhere) for two hundred years?'<sup>4</sup> There has still never been an attempt to address the issue in more detail in scholarly writing. It is perhaps not surprising that this has been the case, as throughout the archive and secondary research on the ethical movement, the content on women is overshadowed by a mass of information regarding the men, who were greater in number and largely held the more dominant roles. However, through a closer examination of the musical women at South Place, it will hopefully be made clear that life at South Place was undeniably shaped by a number of significant women during the Victorian and Edwardian eras, and whilst their current presence in the South Place 'story' is minor, their absence from the reality of South Place would have had a far greater impact than one may suspect from current literature. Therefore, a few key questions were set for this research. How important were the women to the Society's musical activities and the long-term success of the concerts? In turn, did the Society have a noticeable effect on the women's careers? As this period saw a great development in the opportunities and expectations of women musicians in Britain, it has also been relevant to consider what part the Society played in this and how it compared to other musical settings.

Aside from the aim of rewriting the women back into South Place's history, there are additional reasons why a study of the place of women at South Place is appropriate. Established in 1793, the Society has a long history of radical and progressive thought. Throughout the members' changing attitudes towards religion and philosophy and many other topics discussed within the Society, a broad-minded and proactive attitude towards feminism has been consistently at the foreground of discussion. A more comprehensive overview of the Society's activities and outlook leading up to the early

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<sup>4</sup> Herrick, Jim. *Aspiring to the Truth: Two Hundred Years of the South Place Ethical Society* (London: Conway Hall Ethical Society, 2016), 23.

twentieth century will appear in subsequent chapters and will show how feminism fits into its agenda. Through the accounts of how the women musicians were treated at South Place, this understanding will allow for questions to be answered over whether the feminist views at the Society were truly reflected in a practical sense, particularly in comparison to more conventional musical settings in London.

By focusing on the years 1887 – 1927, the research for this project will support existing scholarship on radical societies in the Victorian era, London histories and the rapidly growing field of literature concerning women musicians of the past. Additionally, these years cover a period of great changes in Britain, due to developments in science, technology and the repercussions of World War One. Coinciding with this was a number of significant changes at the Society, including its controversial conversion from a religious to an ethical society. Thus, this project uncovers some of the ways in which the development of Conway Hall's past was shaped by Victorian Britain and how the Society grew to find its place within a fast-developing culture. This period was also a particularly vibrant time for music at the Society, with choirs, ensembles, lectures and concerts all actively engaging members as a form of 'rational recreation'. Furthermore, 1927 marks the year that the South Place Ethical Society left their home at the chapel and moved to their new premises at Conway Hall. Shortly before the move, the South Place Sunday Popular Concert Committee presented their 1000<sup>th</sup> concert, a momentous number for any musical endeavour. Although this was cause for great celebration at the Ethical Society, the 1920s also mark a considerable decline in the popularity of the ethical movement, which was close to extinction by the 1930s, saved by the perhaps unexpected longevity of South Place Ethical Society. So whilst it is not a movement that is as widely heard of today as it was 100 years ago, this thesis will cover a distinctive and dynamic portion of British history, which will hopefully reveal new insight into an area of the ethical movement that has so far been unexplored. Thus, the findings of this project could be useful to scholars from a broad range of disciplines, including historians of London, radical and intellectual movements, feminism and musicologists.

The rest of this chapter will focus on the nucleus of the project, the Conway Hall Ethical Society (CHES) archive, and other primary sources that have supplemented the

initial findings. This will mainly focus on the musical holdings from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and how they have been used for this study. The emphasis of Chapter 2 will be to establish the range of contexts that support the rest of the thesis. In order to do this I will discuss some key literature that will illuminate the gaps in academic study where this thesis will contribute. The chapter begins with an overview of what was happening in London during this period, in particular, in ways that were linked to the development of South Place and the ethical movement. This will then lead into a discussion of musical life in London, followed by a focus on musical women during this period. As this is an interdisciplinary project, Chapter 2 is not an attempt to cover all of the significant literature drawn on for this thesis. Instead, each chapter will comment on the literature relevant to its specific focus. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the history of South Place with a nuanced perspective focusing on the Society's connection to feminism. Chapter 4 will then switch focus to the relationship between music and the ethical movement, looking at its various functions and effects within this community, highlighting the musical life that existed at South Place outside of the Sunday concerts. Chapters 3 and 4 combined will justify the specific focus on music and women at South Place in the following chapters. Chapter 5 will take a fresh look at the history of the South Place Sunday Popular Concerts between 1887 and 1927, with an acknowledgment of the impact of World War One during this time frame. In Chapter 6, I have used the 1915 concert of women composers as a lens through which to discuss the range of women musicians who participated in the first 1000 concerts.

Chapters 7, 8 and 9 are approached as case studies of individual women musicians, which despite showing a set of very specific experiences, provide a more detailed look at the role of women musicians at South Place. The three women have been selected as notable examples because at the early stages of research they all surfaced as particularly prominent names within the archive, and there is currently a limited amount of information available about their careers as musicians. As each woman had a different role at South Place, the case studies also highlight the various reasons why women were attracted to a musical career at South Place and the different ways in which they contributed. Chapter 7 is based on the performer, Jessie Grimson, and her family who were critical to the longevity of her career. Next, Chapter 8 looks at the

composer Edith Sweptstone, whose work went beyond the walls of South Place but whose reputation did not continue into the latter half of the twentieth century. Chapter 9 will focus on the work of Josephine Troup, to show how some women had more multifaceted roles and deeper connections to the Society and its values. In the conclusions, findings from each of these case studies will be brought together to answer the broader questions of the project and what these add to current knowledge about the history of Conway Hall and the musical women of Britain.

## **1.2 Primary Sources**

The foundation of this thesis has been built through historical research based on primary data. The initial primary sources are from the CHES archive, which contains documents regarding the Society's history from as early as 1685 to the present. A full and detailed catalogue can be accessed through the Conway Hall library and items can be searched via the online database. Access to the archive is available to the public upon request.<sup>5</sup> The whole archive contains minutes, financial records, legal records, property records, membership records, documentation of the Society's activities, photographs, correspondence, press cuttings and collections relating specifically to the many subcommittees of the Society.<sup>6</sup> One of these subcommittees is for the Conway Hall Sunday Concerts, previously known as the South Place Sunday Popular Concert committee. Within this subseries alone (SPES/7), there are: committee papers, catalogues and records of performances, lists of artists, advertising material and reviews, correspondence, concert programmes and other ephemera. However, references to musical activities permeate the archive, reflecting the manner in which music filtered into many areas of the Society's activities.

### **Concert Committee Annual Reports**

One of the main starting points for this project was the annual reports from the SPSPC committee. The first report was written in 1888 after South Place had produced a run of thirteen concerts between 1 January and 25 March 1888 and completed their take-over of the concert series from the People's Concert Society. The committee referred

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<sup>5</sup> Conway Hall Ethical Society. "Archives." Last modified 2018. Accessed 18 October 2018. <https://conwayhall.org.uk/library/about-the-collection/archives-family-history/>

<sup>6</sup> CHES archive: SPES1/1/1 – SPES7/8/5

to this as their second season, having also organised some of the concerts in 1887. In the opening paragraphs, it is written: 'The elevating and refining influence of good music is now so very generally acknowledged, that it is hoped adequate support will be forthcoming...', indicating what the committee envisioned as the purpose of their undertaking, and their early concerns about whether or not the concerts would be financially viable.<sup>7</sup> Unusually, the report mostly comprised of a press article, in this case from the *Pall Mall Gazette*.<sup>8</sup> Its main focus is the philanthropic and educative nature of the concerts, particularly for the working class. Attention is also drawn to the fact that the instrumental works were no longer split into smaller sections and interspersed with songs (as was common), because many of the audience were regulars and as a result gave full attention and appreciation to the music. Such points highlight what the concert committee felt were important achievements to emphasise to the general committee and future potential audiences.

The rest of the report continues in a more usual fashion. There is a complete list of composers whose work was programmed during the season, matched with the type of work that was performed (e.g. 'String Quartets', 'Duets for Violincello and Piano' and 'Vocal Solos'). This is in addition to a list of instrumentalists, vocalists and committee members, and the report finishes with details of the next season. Later reports follow the same format, with the inclusion of a balance sheet and more detailed accounts of the concerts. For example, the report of the twelfth season (1897/98) contains brief summaries of concerts dedicated to Brahms, Mendelssohn, Schumann and Scandinavian music. The tastes of their audience also come through in comments such as 'Russian music, which is now attracting such marked attention...'. Special mentions of the Grimson family, who played on four occasions that year, also show that they were considered among their favourite performers that year. As well as being valuable for showing more about the reception of the concerts and their success from the committee's point of view, they also often contain references to other concert series that South Place saw to be kindred or competitive concerts. For example, the twelfth season report contains references to the 'excellent Sunday Orchestral Concerts' that

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<sup>7</sup> SPSPC committee annual report, second season, SPES 7/1/14.

<sup>8</sup> SPSPC committee annual report, second season, SPES 7/1/14. Review in *Pall Mall Gazette*, 3 April 1888.

were going on in various locations in London, which may have been a factor in their drop in audience numbers. There was also notice of the closing of the Chamber Concerts at the small Queen's Hall, which they hoped would bring more people to their own concerts. A note of thanks to the People's Concert Society and an account of their successful concerts that year suggest less competitiveness and more comradeship with their founding society. The annual reports were a particularly useful source during the first 18 months of research when the concert programmes were unavailable, but they lacked a significant amount of detail that could only be found in the programmes.

### **Concert Programmes**

Most of the programmes from the first 1000 concerts are now stored in the archive and contain many points of interest. As well as a more accurate view of the repertoire, the programmes also provide programme notes for the larger works in the concert. Members of the concert committee usually wrote these, so they often provide contemporary perspectives on the music, and in some cases contribute to the little knowledge that exists about compositions that can no longer be found, including some by British female composers. This was particularly useful for finding out more about Swepstone's music, as the descriptions of her chamber music in the programme notes are much more substantial than in many of the press reviews.

Some of the best aspects of the specific set of programmes kept in the CHES archive are the handwritten notes by one of the key organisers Alfred J. Clements (and occasionally his colleagues). Most of the time he recorded how long each piece lasted and he noted if there were recalls or encores, all useful information for future concert planning. Clements also often commented on the quality of the music and the performers very honestly, not holding back if he did not enjoy the performance. Sometimes there are more general comments on the events of the evening, and any last-minute changes or additions to the programmes were always noted.

The following example (Images 3 and 4) from the first concert of the second season is one of the better-preserved programmes; others are more torn and faded, but are mostly still decipherable. It shows the various ways in which Clements annotated the

programmes. A last-minute change in performers was fairly common, as were several encores per concert, particularly in the earlier years before the committee discouraged them on the basis that the concerts were becoming too long. In this programme, Clements has also annotated the printed words of 'The Wreck of Hesperus' during the concert, presumably based on what Frank Connery actually sang, and made a note to himself that the words would be better divided into three columns in future programmes. On this programme, he has also noted at the top other members of the committee who were present, although this is not done routinely. The format of this programme is fairly representative of how they looked over the next forty years, although the programme notes are often longer. Requests for the audience to not leave during the performances eventually disappear as the audience clearly become more accustomed to the more serious engagement with the music that the South Place committee desired. Notices about the collection and future concerts remain standard, and sometimes advertisements for other concerts or events appear alongside them.

Went also William, Mrs W. S. G. Butler & Ada Carpenter

SOUTH PLACE INSTITUTE,  
 SOUTH PLACE, FINSBURY, E.C.  
 (Close to Broad Street, Liverpool Street, and Moorgate Street Stations.)

SOUTH PLACE SUNDAY POPULAR CONCERTS.  
 (SECOND SEASON.)

First Concert of the Series,  
 SUNDAY, JANUARY 1, 1888.

1st Violin ... HERR HENKEL. Viola ... *Wm. Heydrich* MR. DOWSON.  
 2nd Violin ... *Mr. Edward O'Brien* MR. DAVIES. Violoncello ... SIGNOR PERUZZI.  
 Vocalists ... MISS CLARA ROBSON and MR. FRANK CONNERY.  
 Accompanist ... MR. CHARLES IMHOF.

PROGRAMME AND WORDS OF THE SONGS

1. QUARTET IN F MAJOR, Op. 18, No. 1. . . . . Beethoven.  
 (For Two Violins, Viola, and Violoncello).  
 Allegro con brio.  
 Adagio affettuoso ed appassionato.  
 Scherzo and Trio—Allegro molto.  
 Allegro.

2. SONG . . . "The Wreck of the Hesperus" . . . . . Halton.  
 (d. 1886.)  
 MR. FRANK CONNERY.

It was the schooner Hesperus,  
 That sailed the wintry sea;  
 And the skipper had taken his little daughter  
 To bear him company.  
 Blue were her eyes as the fairy flax,  
 Her cheeks like the dawn of day,  
 And her bosom white as the hawthorn buds  
 That ope in the month of May.  
 The skipper he stood beside the helm,  
 With his pipe in his mouth,  
 And watched how the veering flaw did blow  
 The smoke—now west—now south.  
 Then up and spake an old sailor  
 Had sailed the Spanish Main,  
 "I pray thee put into yonder port,  
 For I fear a hurricane.  
 Last night the moon had a golden ring,  
 And to-night no moon we see!"  
 The skipper he blew a whistle from his pipe,  
 And a scornful laugh laughed he.  
 Down came the storm, and smote amain  
 The vessel in its strength;  
 She shuddered and paused, like a frightened steed,  
 Then leaped for cable's length.  
 "Come hither! come hither! my little daughter,  
 And do not tremble so,  
 For I can weather the roughest gale  
 That ever wind did blow."  
 "O father! I hear the church-bells ring,  
 'Oh! say what may it be?"  
 "'Tis a fog-bell on a rock-bound coast"  
 And he steered for the open sea.  
 "O father! I see a gleaming light,  
 'Oh! say what may it be?"  
 But the father answered never a word,  
 A frozen corpse was he.  
 Lashed to the helm, all stiff and stark,  
 With his face turned to the skies,  
 The lantern gleamed, through the gleaming snow,  
 On his fixed and glassy eyes.  
 Then the maiden clasped her hands, and prayed  
 That saved she might be;  
 And she thought of Him who stilled the waves  
 On the Lake of Galilee.

And fast thro' the midnight dark and drear,  
 Thro' the whistling sleet and snow,  
 Like a sheeted ghost the vessel swept,  
 Towards the reef of Norman's Woe.  
 Her rattling shrouds, all sheathed in ice,  
 With the masts went by the board;  
 Like a vessel of glass she stove and sank,  
 Oh! oh! the breakers roared!  
 At day-break, on the bleak sea-beach  
 A fisherman stood aghast,  
 To see the form of a maiden fair  
 Lashed close to a drifting mast.  
 The salt sea was frozen on her breast,  
 The salt tears in her eyes,  
 And he saw her hair, like the brown sea-weed,  
 On the billows fall and rise.  
 Such was the wreck of the Hesperus,  
 In the midnight and the snow;  
 Heaven save us from a death like this  
 On the reef of Norman's Woe!

3. VIOLONCELLO SOLO—  
 Adagio in A . . . . . Bernhard Romberg.  
 (d. 1841.)  
 SIGNOR PERUZZI.

4. ARIA . . . "Che farò senza Euridice" (Orfeo) . . . . . Gluck.  
 (b. 1714, d. 1787.)  
 MISS CLARA ROBSON.

Recitative.  
 Sposa! Euridice! Consorte! Ah! più non vive! la chiamo in  
 van! misero me! la perdo e di nuovo, e per sempre! O legge!  
 O morte! O ricordo crudele! non ho soccorso, non m'avanza  
 consiglio! Io veggo solo (oh fiera vista!) il luttuoso aspetto del  
 orrido mio stato! ziaziati, sorte rea! son disperato!

Aria.  
 Che farò senza Euridice!  
 Dove andrò senza il mio ben!  
 Euridice! Euridice! oh Dio! rispondi,  
 Io son pur il tuo fedel!  
 Ah non m'avanza più soccorso,  
 Più speranza nè dal mondo nè dal ciel!

TRANSLATION OF ARIA.  
 What sad lot the stars prepare me,  
 Knowest thou not my loved one dear?  
 Euridice! Euridice! I dread furies shall tear me;  
 Oh my cry, my sighs now hear!  
 Ah, from this heart, peace, fate doth vanish,  
 Joy shall vanish, and will ne'er more hence appear!

5. VIOLIN SOLO . . . "Legende," Op. 17. . . . . Wieniawski.  
 (b. 1835, d. 1880.)  
 HERR HENKEL.



Image 4 - Concert Programme, 1 January 1888

6. SONG ..... "The King's Jester" ..... A. Cellier.  
MR. FRANK CONNERY.

Oh! who so merry as I?  
Who so light-hearted and free?  
Both princes and lords I defy,  
Care is all fiddle-de-dee;  
I joke with the ermine of kings,  
Crack jests on the smile of a queen,  
My laughter in palaces rings,—  
Oh! Oh! I am merry, I ween.  
Heigho! a quibble, a quip,  
A riddle, an idle conceit,  
The tiniest bit of nonsensical wit,  
And there is the world at my feet!  
I am not a beauty I know,  
But beauty—what is it, I pray?  
It melts as the transient snow,  
As a dream it soon passes away;  
Ha! ha! I am ugly and small,  
But still I am merry and free,  
I would not be pretty at all,  
For oh! what is beauty to me?  
Heigho! a quibble, a quip, &c.

I live on the fat of the land,  
I chink yellow gold in my purse;  
In return, with a prodigal hand,  
What favours I freely disperse!  
For who at the banqueting board  
Such boisterous merriment brings?  
Who else in the world can afford  
To jest at the ermine of kings?  
Heigho! a quibble, a quip, &c.

7. SONG.... "The Lady of the Lea" ..... Smart.  
MISS CLARA ROBSON. (b. 1813, d. 1879.)

Oh! the Lady of the Lea,  
Fair, and young, and gay was she,  
Beautiful exceedingly,  
The Lady of the Lea.

Many a wooer sought her hand,  
For she had gold and she had land,  
Everything at her command,  
The Lady of the Lea,  
Oh! the Lady of the Lea,  
Fair, and young, and gay was she,  
Fanciful exceedingly,  
The Lady of the Lea.

When she held in bow'r or hall,  
Banquet high, or festival,  
On every side her glance would fall,  
Sparkling merrily,  
But when asked if she would wed,  
She would toss her dainty head,  
Saying, laughingly, instead,  
"Sirs, we would be free."  
"Time enough, I trow," quoth she,  
"When we're tired of liberty;  
"For the present we would be  
"The Lady of the Lea."

To her bow'r at length there came  
A youthful knight of noble name,  
Hand and heart in hope to claim,  
And in love fell she!  
Still she put his suit aside,  
So he left her in her pride,  
And, broken-hearted, drooped and died,  
The Lady of the Lea.  
Oh! the Lady of the Lea,  
Fair and young, as fair could be,  
Cold within the tomb lies she!  
Sleeping peacefully.

8. QUARTET IN C MAJOR, No. 6 ..... Mozart.  
(b. 1756, d. 1791.)  
(For Two Violins, Viola, and Violoncello.)

Adagio—Allegro.  
Andante cantabile.  
Menuetto and Trio, Allegretto.  
Allegro molto.

**NOTES ON THE PROGRAMME.**

1.—This is BEETHOVEN's first published Quartet for stringed instruments, and is one of a set of six dedicated by the composer to his patron, Prince Lobkowitz. It is a splendid example of its composer's powers; the first two movements being remarkably original, especially when it is remembered that the work was written while Beethoven was still in what is known as his "first period," and under the influence of Mozart. Indeed, the six Quartets forming Beethoven's Opus 18 are frequently compared with the six composed by Mozart and dedicated to Haydn, of which No. 6 forms the last item in our programme this evening. In the first movement of Beethoven's quartet notice should be taken of the wonderful use made of the short and simple opening subject given out by all the instruments in unison, and which (as in many similar instances) is developed in a most masterly manner. The opening of the second part of this movement is very fine, leading to the resumption of the original subject in a magnificent *fortissimo*. The second movement is most expressive, the beautiful theme being given out by the first violin, and continued by the violoncello. A passionate climax is reached near the end of this *Adagio*, after which the movement dies away *pianissimo*. The two final movements are of a lighter character, the final *Allegro* being remarkably spirited, and including a very melodious second subject.

3.—BERNHARD ROMBERG was one of the most celebrated violoncello players of his time, and wrote a large number of solos for this instrument, including some Quartets for stringed instruments in which the 'cello has the most important part.

5.—HENRI WIENIAWSKI, the composer of this favourite piece, wrote many effective solos for the violin, on which he was one of the most celebrated performers of modern times. As an executant he perhaps excelled in music of the brilliant school, but he was also a fine interpreter of the works of Beethoven and other classical masters.

8.—The last of six Quartets dedicated by MOZART to Haydn, and perhaps the best of its composer's many works of this kind. The themes of the *Allegro* are very melodious, and the whole movement is carried on with unflagging spirit; the opening of the second part (as is usual with Mozart) being particularly interesting. The *Andante cantabile* is one of the loveliest ever written by Mozart, which is saying much, he having excelled in the composition of slow movements. The *Minuetto* is very ingenious, the *Trio* being in marked contrast, and the final *Allegro molto* is of a most joyous nature, and fittingly terminates one of Mozart's finest efforts in chamber music.

Those WISHING TO LEAVE before the termination of the Concert are requested to do so in the intervals between the pieces or movements, so that the performance of the music may be undisturbed.

GRAND PIANOFORTE BY MESSRS. JOHN BRINSMEAD & SONS.

Doors open at 6.30. Concert to begin at 7 o'clock.

ADMISSION FREE.—Children under 12 not admitted unless accompanied by a grown-up person.

COLLECTION TO DEFRAY EXPENSES.—Should adequate support be forthcoming, an extended series of Concerts will be given. A small contribution from each person attending will no doubt render this possible.

The SECOND CONCERT of the Series will be given on Sunday next, January 8th, when the following will appear:—Herr POLONASKI (VIOLIN), Herr L. ROESE (VIOLONCELLO), and Miss KATE CHEYNE (PIANOFORTE).

VOCALISTS ... Fraulein IRMA BRAUN & Mr. EDWARD GATFIELD.  
ACCOMPANIST ... Mr. CHARLES IMHOF.

## Minute Books

The concert committee's minute books reveal more about the decision-making process of the committee and more detailed financial information than is given in the annual reports. Disappointingly, the SPSPC committee minute book from 1892 to 1906 is another missing item from the collection, and after three years of hunting is no closer to being found. Edith Swepstone was on the committee during this period and the books would have helped to show how active her role was during this period.

However, the rest of the concert committee minute books are kept in the archive. The first book, which can be found under SPES7/1/3, only covers the years 1887 and 1888. The second, SPES7/1/4, continues from the last and takes us up to 1892. The next book, SPES7/1/5, is much larger in size, starting in 1906 and continually used until 1934. Subsequent years are also available. Prior to the concert committee, there was also a music committee which kept twelve years of minute books between 1876 and 1888. These mostly contain information about the choir and music for the Sunday services, but also cover music at the Society's other social events.

## Publications

The earliest publication linked to South Place was *The Monthly Repository*, edited by the South Place minister William J. Fox between 1832 and 1838. The *Ethical Record* began in 1895 as the *South Place Magazine*, and is still published on a monthly basis by Conway Hall today. Between 1887 and 1927, the contents of the magazine usually included summaries of lectures and discussions at the Society that month, an article by one of the members, reports on meetings and activities at the Society and notices about upcoming events. This included details of the next month's Sunday Concerts, and the hymns and anthems to be included in future Sunday services. Some articles highlight the sorts of discussions that focused on music, including debates about the hymn books. Occasionally excerpts from other publications were inserted when relevant. For example, in 1925 South Place reprinted two paragraphs from *The Ethical Societies' Chronicle* that considered the South Place chamber concerts as an ethical society in their own right, due to the unique community and form of fellowship that

the concerts provided.<sup>9</sup> J. Henry Lloyd claimed that the meetings were ‘much more than a “concert”’ and describes the atmosphere as more like a gathering of friends, where he has found a calm and healing influence. His classification of chamber music as music ‘of the social circle’ (as opposed to an ‘ambitious’ large orchestra) suggests that the music itself has an egalitarian quality that aligns with the ideology of an ethical society.

*The Ethical Societies’ Chronicle* was an organ of the ethical movement that started in 1924. Prior to that, there was also *The Ethical World*, which gave national and international reports about the ethical movements and brought members of the local societies into a wider conversation. Many editions can be viewed in the British Library, and several have been drawn on in later chapters of this thesis in reference to the content about Ethical hymns and women’s suffrage.

### **General Committee Papers**

Documents from the rest of the committee papers supplement information about what was happening at the concerts. The minute books for the whole Society show that the concert committee was mostly left in control of its own activities, and the main interactions were special requests from the concert committee, usually involving money and hiring, and the submission of its own annual reports. The South Place annual reports also provide added context about what other activities were surrounding the concerts and any changes to the Society’s objectives. For example, the 1888 report devotes four pages to discussing the Society’s transition from ‘religious’ to ‘ethical’, as well as a reduced version of the new concert reports. There are also lists of lectures and discourses that were given throughout the year. Discourses in 1888 included three by Annie Besant, two by Frederika Macdonald on Jean Jacques Rousseau, and eighteen by their new minister, Stanton Coit, which were mostly centred on ethics and religion but included one on ‘Woman’s Work in Social Reform’. Macdonald was the only woman to also give lectures that year, one on Buddha and the other titled ‘Old Indian Poetry and Religious Thought’. The 1888 report also includes short reports about the separate Tuesday evening lectures, the soir   committee, the

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<sup>9</sup> Henry Lloyd, J. “South Place Ethical Society: The Fellowship of Music.” *South Place Magazine*, 30, no.4, (April 1925): 7. Review in *The Ethical Societies’ Chronicle*, February 1925.

institute committee and the library. Each of the reports shows a meaningful amount about the whole Society's engagement with music and feminism, both through the discourse and the actions of the Society.

Minute books from the soirée committee have added further insight into the musical activities of the Society. A few relevant letters also add to the understanding of how the concerts and musical side of the Society was run, including some by Josephine Troup about the hymn books. A range of ethical and secular hymn books resides in the Conway Hall Library, rather than the archive. They reveal important themes about the movements and were used every week at the Sunday services, making music central to their activities.<sup>10</sup> Most of the books contain many hymns that were written and composed by women.

### **1.3 Primary Sources outside of the CHES archive**

#### **The Press**

During the earlier phase of research, without the full set of concert programmes available, newspaper advertisements and reviews were one of the main ways to get a fuller picture. The Sunday Concerts were advertised inconsistently in *The Musical Standard* and *The Daily Telegraph* with highlights of the programme. More insightful are the short reviews from *The Musical Times*, which tell a little more about the reception of the concerts and with a less biased view than the South Place reports, although as Alan Bartley notes, most contemporary reviews need to be treated with an element of scepticism.<sup>11</sup> Looking through contemporary press material was also helpful to compare the South Place concerts with others that were being advertised and reviewed in London at the same time. Lewis Foreman's book *Music in England: 1885 – 1920* is primarily a collection of the musical reviews from *Hazell's Annual*, which took form as a two or three-page survey covering the previous year's musical events in London. This has been used as a guide to understand the British music scene during this period and will be looked at in more detail in Chapter 2.

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<sup>10</sup> Prominent themes in the hymn books include: 'Truth', 'Freedom', 'Progress', 'The Power of Goodness' and 'Nature'. How these reflected the core values of the ethical movement is explored further in Chapters 4 and 9.4.

<sup>11</sup> Bartley, Alan. *Far from the Fashionable Crowd: The People's Concert Society and Music in London's Suburbs* (Newbury: Whimbrel Publishing, 2010), 1.

### **Other Concert Programmes**

This leads to another significant set of primary sources: concert programmes and ephemera from other London chamber concerts between 1887 and 1927, particularly to find concerts that featured works of the women musicians also performed at South Place. This includes programmes from St. James's Hall, Queen's Hall, Aeolian Hall, Bechstein Hall (now known as Wigmore Hall) and the People's Concert Society. Most of these were consulted at the RCM and the British Library. Further afield, contemporary programmes from the Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra are also significant, as they performed a significant amount of orchestral music by Edith Swepstone. Similarly, the concert programmes from John Parr's Chamber Music Concerts hosted in Sheffield also include a number of performances of Swepstone's compositions, which can be found at Manchester Central Library and the British Library. Both the Bournemouth and Sheffield programmes provide extra information through programme notes, knowledge of who was performing the works and how they were programmed. An overview of the presence of women composers, especially in Victorian and Edwardian London concert programmes will contribute to ascertaining how unique the South Place concerts were and how this affected their popularity.

### **Other Ethical Societies**

Although no other ethical society still exists, Bishopsgate Institute, London is home to the British Humanist Association (BHA) archive, a large collection of documentation around freethought and humanism.<sup>12</sup> It includes three boxes of material relating to the Ethical Church and related ethical societies, dated from 1894 to 1965.<sup>13</sup> They contain similar documentation to the CHES archive: minute books, annual reports, financial records, correspondence and press cuttings. Most significantly, this includes some of the minute books from the Women's Group of the Ethical Movement (from 1920 – 26) and papers from the Annual Congress Meetings of the Ethical Union where the group participated.<sup>14</sup> The minutes of the West London Ethical Society (later known as the

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<sup>12</sup> Full catalogue: Bishopsgate Institute. "BHA Archive." Last modified July 2014. Accessed September 2018. <http://www.bishopsgate.org.uk/uploads/media/98/10497.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> BHA/3/1/ - BHA/3/1/14

<sup>14</sup> BHA/3/9/1

Ethical Church) general meetings also revealed that Troup was on their committee for several years.<sup>15</sup>

The British Library also holds a few copies of the Leighton Hall Neighbourhood Guild review magazine, which was led by leader of the ethical movement, Stanton Coit. Whilst there are references to music throughout the documents, a full picture of music in the ethical societies is anything but complete, and has been completely neglected in recent scholarship.

### **Musical Scores**

The starting point for finding scores by the women composers whose work was performed at Conway Hall was the Frank Hawkins's Chamber Music Collection, residing at Conway Hall. Frank Hawkins, the treasurer of the Sunday Concerts between 1905 and 1929, left his large collection of over 2000 chamber music scores to the Society. The collection contains mostly Classical, Romantic and early twentieth-century music that was performed at the concert series, but unfortunately does not contain any undiscovered music by women. The collection is therefore only partially reflective of the concert series' interesting repertoire history, but nevertheless contains some unusual music and goes beyond the first forty years of the concerts. The catalogue can be accessed on the Conway Hall website and copies of the music can be requested from the library.<sup>16</sup>

As Lewis Foreman explains in his article *Lost and only sometimes found*, there are a number of reasons why a lot of the lesser-known British music was lost throughout the twentieth century, particularly during the 1960s when many of the London publishers moved from their long-standing premises and a significant amount of music was destroyed.<sup>17</sup> This particularly affected the music of historical women composers, whose work for a long time was considered less important. These attitudes towards women's music also meant that it was often not considered worthy of publishing or

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<sup>15</sup> BHA3/8/1

<sup>16</sup> Conway Hall Ethical Society. "Frank Hawkins Catalogue." Accessed October 2018.  
[https://conwayhall.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Hawkins\\_Bequest\\_Catalogue\\_\\_\\_By\\_Composer.pdf](https://conwayhall.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Hawkins_Bequest_Catalogue___By_Composer.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> Foreman, Lewis. "Lost and only sometimes found." Accessed October 2018.  
[https://www.ism.org/features/lost\\_and\\_only\\_sometimes\\_found](https://www.ism.org/features/lost_and_only_sometimes_found)

keeping hold of after their initial publication. As a result of many factors, finding the women's compositions that were performed at the South Place concerts has proved rather difficult, and much of it has remained unfound. It would have been fascinating to find some of the more unusual compositions listed in the South Place Sunday Popular Concert's annual reports, such as Swepstone's chamber music for woodwind and full-scale orchestral music.<sup>18</sup>

One method of attempting to find the missing music involved another set of primary sources: ancestral records including birth certificates, baptism records, censuses, travel documents, marriage certificates and wills. Through consulting these documents, it was possible slowly to track down whether or not copies of the music may have been passed down through generations and had been kept quietly hidden away. These explorations came to no avail (although there are still many unexplored avenues); however the time was still well spent as this knowledge has enhanced the case studies of this research, through a new awareness of the women's backgrounds, especially concerning, wealth, marriage and possible family support.

However, whilst at the start of this project it felt as though there would be a limited amount of musical sources, through a process of searching through library catalogues globally, the end result thus far is a large new collection of music that can be looked at in a new light as part of a composer's body of work, rather than as an individual piece of music with no context. The thesis contains lists of work by Troup and Swepstone, along with references for where they can be located, which reaches as far as the University of Melbourne Library. I now have a plentiful collection of scans, photocopies and photographs of each composer's works, which has the potential to be digitised properly in the near future to encourage future performances. Among the available scores by Troup and Swepstone are many songs, a range of music for various chamber ensembles and two works for a small string orchestra.

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<sup>18</sup> SPSPC committee annual reports, SPES 7/1/14 – 17.

## **Poetry**

An unexpected direction that this project took was into the realm of poetry. This is primarily because of Troup's significant output of at least sixteen poems and several fables, as well as her compositions. Poetry is also central to the compilation of the ethical hymn books, many of which were based on nineteenth-century secular poems. These have provided interesting points for discussion, but as music is the main focus of this thesis, there is still capacity for more thorough poetic analysis. Phyllis Weliver's large output of work about music and poetry in the nineteenth century has been influential in thinking about how the two art forms relate in the context of this project.

### **1.4 Other Limitations and Approaches**

The immensity of the CHES archive has been a mixed blessing; even a narrow focus of forty years has left potential sources unexplored. A slice history approach was discounted in the mid stages of the research, not only because it could miss important revelations but also because it proved less compatible with a rapidly changing organisation. Case studies provided a better approach, although this too opened a vast set of potential sources. By contrast, programme collections chronicling the concert series were incomplete, and findings in Chapter 6 should be interpreted in this light. Nonetheless, those programmes that were available show notable disparities between South Place and its contemporaries, and additional programme discoveries would be unlikely to bridge the gap.

Although large amount of music has been collected throughout the process of this project, musical analysis only plays a secondary role as a route towards the conclusions. This is because the central questions of this thesis are focused on the significance of the women and their music, and are therefore better answered by placing the music within a historical and cultural context. The compositions of Swepstone and Troup have of course been scrutinised in detail as a way of revealing their identities as composers and how they fit in alongside their contemporaries at South Place. A distinctive method of this project has been to encompass all aspects of music making, so the works that are examined do not just include chamber music and orchestral music, which are more regularly considered in musicology, but also hymns and children's songs. In the same vein, the musical work that the women contributed



to outside of the concert hall has been considered as equally important. This approach has led to a nuanced set of biographical data about the women and a more holistic view of the role of music at South Place.

### **2.1 Introduction**

People living at the turn of the twentieth century confronted a period of profound social and intellectual change. This chapter will begin by establishing some of the contexts in which South Place evolved during these years, through a review of historiographical literature. Where each topic becomes more specific, elements of the chapter will be presented in the mode of a literature review. An intentional outcome of this is that this chapter will also highlight some of the methodological approaches that influenced the direction of this project. Because the focus of the thesis is on the archival material relating to music and women at South Place, consequently a large part of this chapter will look at the musical landscape of Britain during this era, with particular focus on the field of archive-based musicology and especially feminist musicology. However, as the South Place has a broad and multifaceted history, the opening of the chapter will focus more closely on the contexts that surrounded South Place between 1887 and 1927, and the changes that led to South Place Chapel's progression from a religious organisation to an ethical society.

### **2.2 The Intellectual, Social and Cultural Life of London**

During the Victorian era, religious belief was greatly tested and debated. The revered status of the Anglican Church had a significant impact on daily life; living outside it affected whether one could attend universities (before the Universities Tests Act of 1871) or participate in national and local politics (before 1828 – 9). Many Victorians who may have questioned the validity of the bible sustained their connection to the church for such social privileges. However, agitation among the middle-classes led many to question the doctrines surrounding this exclusivity, and William Johnson Fox, leader of the South Place Chapel for a substantial portion of this era, was renowned for his leadership in challenging these issues.

Timothy Larsen put forward the argument that scholarly writing about British intellectual history has often left the impression that the proportion of Victorians who

abandoned religion in favour of science was much higher than in reality.<sup>19</sup> However, David Nash in turn argues that Larsen missed an opportunity in his book, *Crisis of Doubt: Honest Faith in Nineteenth-Century England*, to discuss a much more fluid religious landscape among Victorian thinkers than is often acknowledged.<sup>20</sup> Whilst Victorian society was still highly Christian, new ideas were widely read and discussed, leading to individual journeys through explorations of faith and doubt, which were much less polarised than historians have often portrayed. Issues that were influencing such questioning are neatly summarised by Julie Melnyk in her overview of Victorian religious unsettlement.<sup>21</sup> Firstly, advancements in geology began to reveal the true age of the world and created tensions over biblical inerrancy. This became an even more complex debate after Darwin published *The Origin of Species* in 1859, which exposed a relentless and inharmonious history of natural selection that did not correlate with the all-loving God in the bible. Furthermore, it made people question how humans were any better than beasts if they were simply descendants of other animals – an unsettling thought for many who believed in human superiority. In addition to scientific developments, Classical scholars such as Johann Gottfried Eichhorn, F. A. Wold and Barthold Georg Niebuhr were pioneering new ways of studying texts, treating them as historical documents to be studied in the context of the period in which they were written, thus opening them up to interpretation, criticism and doubt.

Like the debates over faith and doubt, Nash has also argued that the assumed conflict between religious mysticism and rationalism has been overstated, and that they are not necessarily the antithesis of each other.<sup>22</sup> Important figures such as Annie Besant, who is relevant to these contexts through her long association with South Place, were attuned to the virtues of alternative belief systems, and her study of theosophy blended scientism and rationalism.<sup>23</sup> It is here, among the questions and controversies at the boundary between the rational and the religious that South Place fits in. It was a

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<sup>19</sup> Larsen, Timothy. *Crisis of Doubt: Honest Faith in Nineteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 1 – 17.

<sup>20</sup> Nash, David. "Reassessing the "crisis of faith" in the Victorian age: eclecticism and the spirit of moral inquiry." *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 16, no.1 (April 2011): 65 - 82

<sup>21</sup> Melnyk, Julie. "The Victorian Religious Unsettlement" *Victorian Religion: Faith and Life in Britain*. London: Praeger Publishers, 2008. 134 - 154

<sup>22</sup> Nash, "Reassessing the "crisis of faith" in the Victorian age: eclecticism and the spirit of moral inquiry", 80.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 80 – 2.

home for free thinkers, liberals and anyone who sought to find enlightenment on religion, philosophy, ethics and politics of the day. Discussions at the ethical societies played a central role in this culture, as topics were debated from a range of perspectives and leaders such as Moncure Conway did not claim to have answers to all ethical and religious debates. The constitution of South Place Ethical Society stated that: 'The object of the Society is the cultivation of a rational religious sentiment, the study of ethical principles, and the promotion of human welfare, in harmony with advancing knowledge'.<sup>24</sup> The focus on 'rational religious sentiment' emphasises Nash's argument that many Victorians had a fluid outlook towards the relationship between rationalism and religion. The reference to sentiment also acknowledged a place for emotion in the ethical movement, bridging the gap between religion and rationality. Music was one of the key expressive vehicles they used to achieve this end, particularly through the hymns, a significance to the ethical movement that has previously been undervalued.

In his book *Radicals, Secularists and Republicans: Popular freethought in Britain, 1866 – 1915*, Edward Royle situates the ethical movement as a successor to Secularism.<sup>25</sup> As the National Secular Society began to struggle to sustain its membership in the late 1880s, the ethical movement started to attract a similar demographic; a mix of predominantly skilled and unskilled workers from the lower classes, white-collar workers and local business owners from industrial areas filled the halls of the secular and ethical societies.<sup>26</sup> Royle describes the South Place Religious Society under Conway's leadership in the second half of the nineteenth century as not far removed from George J. Holyoake's brand of Secularism. Holyoake did not think secularism should try to deny or assert the existence of God, and was more interested in championing the freedom of individual thought.<sup>27</sup> Holyoake (1817 – 1906) was an influential political figure and knew several of the liberal members of South Place.<sup>28</sup> Other similarities linked the radical thinkers of South Place with members of the

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<sup>24</sup> Printed in editions of the *South Place Magazine* and the annual reports.

<sup>25</sup> Royle, Edward. *Radicals, Secularists and Republicans: Popular Freethought in Britain, 1866 – 1915*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980.

<sup>26</sup> Royle, Edward. *Radicals, Secularists and Republicans: Popular Freethought in Britain, 1866 – 1915*, 127 – 9.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 42; Royle, Edward "Holyoake, George Jacob" in *Dictionary of National Biography*, September 2004.

<sup>28</sup> His funeral service was held at the South Place Chapel in 1906, conducted by J. A. Hobson.

secular societies. Many of the same topics were at the forefront of discussion: liberalism, the labour movement, socialism, land reform, education and women's emancipation were all included. At the ethical and secular societies, these were debated through lectures, discussion groups and in their own publications. The societies also shared similarities in their output of activities. Royle describes the Secularists' 'chapel' life as falling into two main categories – elevation and entertainment. The same could be said of South Place and the ethical societies, whose services and activities had a surprising resemblance to that of a church. This may have been particularly pronounced at South Place due to its roots as a Christian congregation, but Royle points out that these quasi-religious proceedings were a peculiarity of British freethought.<sup>29</sup> Charles Bradlaugh stated that the ideal secular society should provide a debating class, a singing class, a children's school, social gatherings and outdoor excursions.<sup>30</sup> South Place provided all of these, and many were organised by the women of the Society. None of the musical activities, however, have previously been explored in rigorous detail. By doing so in this thesis, a better understanding can be made of the role of the arts in the ethical movement, on which a large emphasis was placed in the Society's aim to create entertainment and elevation for the community, as well as to draw on human emotion as a way of connecting people to ethical values.

In *The Ethical Movement in Great Britain: A Documentary History*, written by South Place member Gustav Spiller, the musical side of ethical life is documented, mainly through Spiller's inclusion of annual reports and extracts from minute books.<sup>31</sup> It was published in 1934, when the movement was in decline but some societies still existed. The overriding narrative throughout Spiller's book follows the story of the men who led and influenced the movement. References to a select few women who were significant members of the ethical societies are only referred to in footnotes. These women include Josephine Troup and Zona Vallance who through more thorough

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<sup>29</sup> Royle, Edward. *Radicals, Secularists and Republicans: Popular Freethought in Britain, 1866 – 1915*, 136.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 137.

<sup>31</sup> Spiller, Gustav. *The Ethical Movement in Great Britain: A Documentary History*. London: Farleigh Press, 1934.

research have both emerged as figures worthy of far more than a few footnotes.<sup>32</sup> This oversight from Spiller also shows that the ethical societies' efforts towards women's equality still left plenty of room for improvement. The most major and recent account is Ian Mackillop's *The British Ethical Societies* (1986), which offers a more well-rounded perspective on the history of South Place Chapel, but still leaves more to be said in the consideration of music and women at the Society.

Both South Place Chapel and the ethical movement grew out of a century of reform movements and radical social changes. Many of these stemmed from the extreme poverty of the working class. This was accentuated in the nation's conscience by Charles Booth's research into late nineteenth-century London, which highlighted the scale of poverty and the various factors that hindered those who fell below the poverty line from escaping their plight.<sup>33</sup> He published the information in several editions, including nine volumes containing detailed poverty maps of the city entitled *Life and Labour of the People in London*, published between 1892 and 1897.<sup>34</sup> These maps show that South Place Chapel was situated away from where the wealthy Londoners lived in the West End (Image 5).<sup>35</sup> Instead it was a location where most of the residents ranged from the well-to-do middle class right to the 'vicious' lowest class of city dwellers (Image 6). It was this range of people who made up the congregation of the chapel, where there could be an active focus on social improvement for the chapel members and the local community. Cultural elevation through music and other arts was one of their routes to attaining these goals.

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 177.

<sup>33</sup> London School of Economics and Political Science. "Charles Booth's London: Poverty maps and police notebook." Last modified 2016. Accessed 1 October 2018. <https://booth.lse.ac.uk/>

<sup>34</sup> Booth, Charles. *Life and Labour of the People in London* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1892).

<sup>35</sup> Both images taken from <https://booth.lse.ac.uk/> Accessed October 2018.

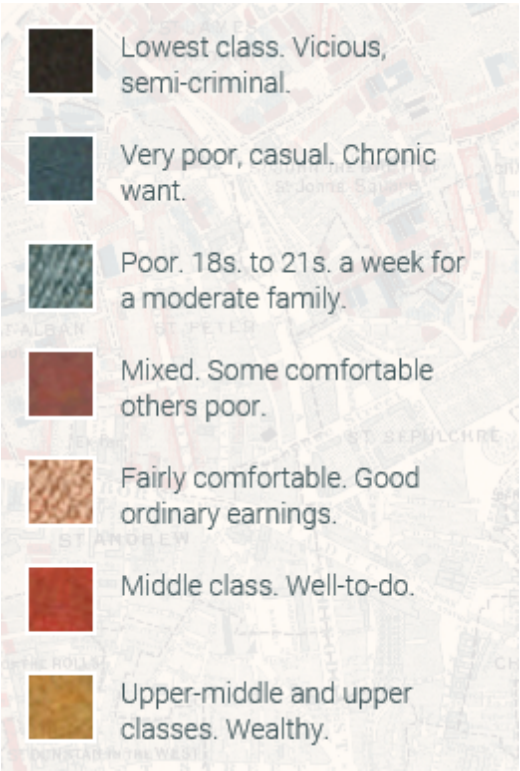
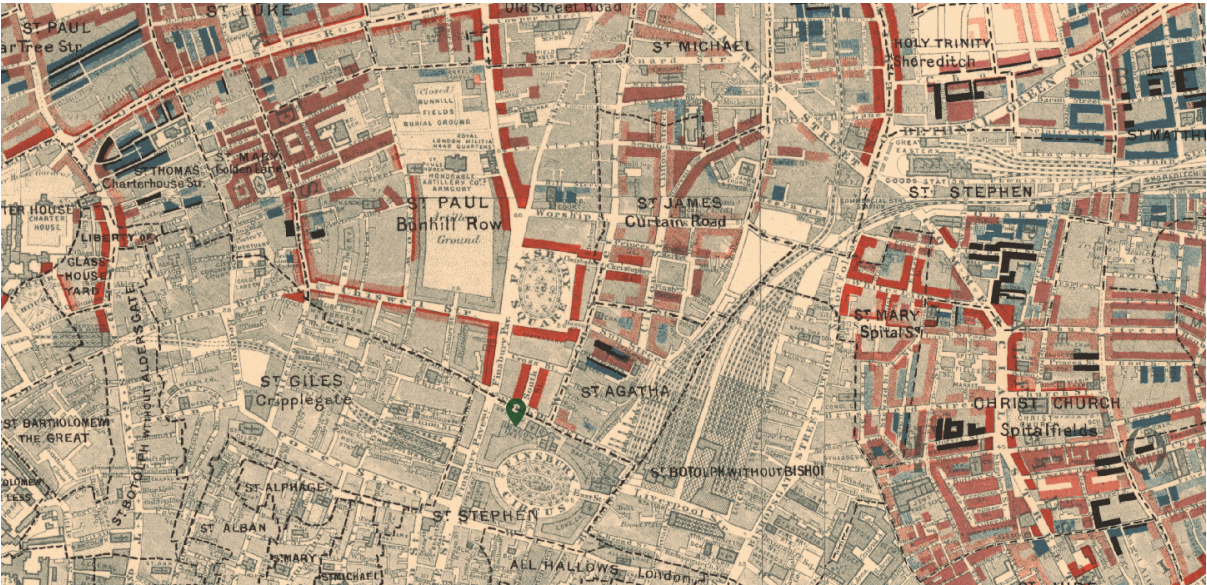


Image 5 - Booth's map of London





Image 6 - Booth's map of London, Finsbury area



= South Place Chapel



Booth's investigations coincided with a time when many people believed the popular Victorian narrative that men could build great fortunes from very little, inspired particularly by Samuel Smiles' book *Self Help* (1859), which argued that hard work and spirited enterprise would lead individuals to success.<sup>36</sup> Booth's research challenged these assumptions and in truth, social mobility was still difficult, and reputation and contacts remained significant factors in daily life. However, it was a realistic goal for many working class men to raise their status to the lower-middle class, and the categories denoting classes were shifting enormously during this time.<sup>37</sup> This links to some of the primary goals of South Place, to be open to everyone, regardless of class, race or religion. This concern spread to the concert committee, who aimed to provide high quality chamber music for everyone. As Bartley notes, there was a sense of social responsibility that weighed on certain of the privileged classes, influenced by figures such as Mayhew, Mearns, Mill and Sims.<sup>38</sup> For South Place, their free concerts were one way of addressing this. Victorian ideas about the educative and moralising effect of music can be found in the theologian Reverend H. R. Haweis's *Music and Morals* from 1871.<sup>39</sup> In his philosophical explorations on the power of music to influence thought and action, Haweis asks how a purely instrumental piece of music could be moral or immoral, trivial or dignified, without definite thoughts or images attached to it.<sup>40</sup> His evaluation that music can be separated into 'good music' and 'bad music' with different intrinsic values is reminiscent of Plato's concept of music as a moralising influence.<sup>41</sup> The same attitude was clearly felt within the SPSPC committee, and other important members of the ethical movement. The early South Place concerts were among many other concerts of 'serious' music aiming to attract the working class of the rapidly growing city.<sup>42</sup> There were many elements that distinguished them from others, one being the notable presence of women in nearly all aspects of the concerts.

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<sup>36</sup> Smiles, Samuel. *Self Help*. London: 1859.

<sup>37</sup> Loftus, Donna. "The Rise of the Victorian Middle Class." Last modified 17 February 2011. Accessed 1 September 2016. [http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/victorians/middle\\_classes\\_01.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/victorians/middle_classes_01.shtml)

<sup>38</sup> Bartley, *Far from the Fashionable Crowd*, 27

<sup>39</sup> Haweis, H. R. *Music and Morals*. Reprint. London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1900.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>41</sup> Green, Edward. "Music and the Victorian Mind: The Musical Aesthetics of the Rev. H.R. Haweis / Glazba i Viktorijanski Um: Estetika Glazbe Vič. H.R. Haweisa." *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 39, no. 2 (2008): 239-56

<sup>42</sup> Meadmore, W. S., *The Story of a Thousand Concerts: 1887 – 1927* (London: South Place Ethical Society, 1927), 4 – 5. Conway Hall Library: 780.78421MEA

Women of all classes were facing great transitions during this period. Throughout the nineteenth century it was seen as undesirable for a woman of the upper class to work, especially in a public arena. Yet by 1901, in light of the inventions of bicycles, typewriters and phones, around twenty five percent of office workers were women. These changes would have been experienced by most of the musical women in this study, particularly the older women such as Josephine Troup, who lived from 1853 until 1913. Also during the nineteenth century, a small but notable group of women started campaigning for issues linked to women's rights, such as Frances Cobbe, Josephine Butler and Millicent Fawcett. This propelled the women's suffrage movement, which reached its peak of momentum during the early 1900s, but was halted in 1914 at the start of the Great War. Whilst the women musicians at South Place may not have all been directly linked to the suffrage movement or have been affected by their position to work, this is an important context to consider when studying their lives and contributions.

Laura Schwarz's book *Infidel Feminism: Secularism, Religion and Women's Emancipation, England 1830 – 1914* also provides a very relevant backdrop for this thesis, by focusing on the place of women in the context of the Victorian Secularist movement, which previous historians have somewhat neglected.<sup>43</sup> Schwarz explores the development of feminism among radical, freethinking women. Although the book is not about South Place specifically, the women Schwarz writes about have similar beliefs, and several of the women she discusses were either visitors or members of South Place, including Annie Besant, Hypatia Bradlaugh Bonner, Sophia Dobson Collet, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Harriet Martineau, among others. As Schwarz's work has so many links to South Place in the nineteenth century, her findings that freethinking feminists made an important contribution to the post-1850s women's movement are applicable to the active and more submerged forms of feminism engaged with at the Ethical Society. It also implies that some of the women musicians discussed in this study may have been involved in this brand of secular feminism, particularly Josephine Troup who was a hard-working member of the ethical movement. Consequently, this links the musical women of South Place to the progressive element of South Place that

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<sup>43</sup> Schwarz, Laura. *Infidel Feminism: Secularism, Religion and Women's Emancipation, England 1830 1914*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013.

was concerned with human welfare and equality, as well as the side that provided entertainment for the community.

### 2.3 British Concert Life

As the South Place Sunday Popular Concerts grew in reputation, they attracted a wider audience than just those who lived in close proximity. Alongside the local audience, the concerts attracted national attention, and the genre of music selected for the concerts was representative of what the Victorians classified as high culture. The music reviews from the *Hazell's Annuals* offer an overview of the high culture music scene in London between 1885 and 1920.<sup>44</sup> It is surprising, therefore, that despite the noted popularity of the South Place concerts during these years, they do not feature once in the *Hazell* reviews. In fact, chamber music receives surprisingly little attention in any of the reviews, which may be due to the rise of the popularity of orchestral music during this period, as is noted in the 1894 entry. Alongside the many mentions of operas, orchestral and choral performances, the chamber music venue that receives the focus of the attention up until 1900 is St. James's Hall, particularly in relation to the Monday and Saturday Popular Concerts. This was likely due to their long establishment (they began in 1859) and influence in the capital. Other chamber concerts that start to receive a few mentions in twentieth-century editions include those given at Bechstein Hall and Aeolian Hall, and particularly Queen's Hall. This only represents a limited view of the chamber music scene during this period. Considering the focus on British composers and ensembles in the reviews, and their prominence in the South Place concerts, it is puzzling that South Place is not acknowledged at all. There are also several similarities between the 'pops' and the South Place Concerts, including the style of programme and their aim to provide affordable chamber music. However, the other concerts mentioned were not organised primarily as a philanthropic endeavour, and perhaps the size and demographic of the audiences were considered important factors for inclusion in *Hazell's Annuals*. Regardless of the reason, the absence of any mention of the South Place concerts in documents such as these presents another reason why it is important to reassess their significance and discover why the South Place concerts were left out of some contemporaneous accounts of the London music

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<sup>44</sup> Elkin, Robert. *Queen's Hall 1893 – 1941 (with a Foreword by Malcolm Sargent)* (London: Rider & Co, 1944), 20 – 21.

scene. The following section of this chapter will review some of the key secondary texts where the South Place concerts have been considered or are especially relevant to the context of this project.

A book that covers concerts given for a more working-class audience is Alan Bartley's *Far from the Fashionable Crowd: The People's Concert Society and Music in London's Suburbs*. As chapter four is about 'South Place and its music' it is worth discussing what the book covers at greater length. The primary focus of Bartley's book is the widespread impact of the People's Concert Society (PCS) from 1878 into the 1930s.<sup>45</sup> He also provides examples of similar enterprises. The Kyrle Society, set up by Miranda Hill in 1877, staged oratorios, organised art exhibitions and supported the founder's sister, Octavia Hill, in a campaign to beautify the East End's open spaces. Another example, the People's Entertainment Society (PES), set up in 1878, was sustained by amateur performers, including Marian McKenzie who went on to become a regular at South Place. At one point the PES was staging concerts in 15 venues across London, but their momentum slowed so that activities came to an end in the early 1890s.<sup>46</sup> The PES's ambitious aim was to cultivate: 'a taste for good, high-class amusement among the poorer classes in the hope of withdrawing them from lower places of resort, to introduce an element of brightness into their lives, and to establish a better feeling between the different classes by bringing them into closer contact with each other'.<sup>47</sup>

In comparison to the People's Entertainment Society, the People's Concert Society had a more modest goal, to increase the popularity of what they considered to be 'good' music. The concerts at South Place were originally set up by the PCS in 1880 and run by them until 1886, when South Place took over the following year. Due to this lengthy association, this book offers a useful account of how the South Place concerts started and the ideology behind their conception. Bartley also posits some of the longer lasting influences of the PCS on the South Place concerts, such as the format introduced by the PCS, which usually consisted of string quartets, songs and instrumental solos. This format continued and was developed at South Place for years

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<sup>45</sup> Bartley, *Far from the Fashionable Crowd*, 2010.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 132 – 134.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 129. Quotation from Letter from Lard Folkestone to *The Musical Times* (1 December 1883), 668.

after the PCS stopped running the concerts and it was an important element of the concerts' success. Additionally, the PCS helped the newly formed SPSPC Committee when they were struggling to keep up with the organisation, by taking control of some of the concerts in the autumn of 1887, an opportunity that would not have been available to most newly founded concert organisations. Bartley also writes a useful examination of the type of audience that attended the concerts and emphasises that they were not simply made up of those of the elevated class who lived in the expensive local area and attended the Sunday morning lectures. However, he also observes that the concert committee was clearly quite confident that the audience would be able to cover the costs of the concerts and in later years a number of regulars paid for subscriptions, indicating that there was a substantial middle-class population among them.

Bartley's explorations of the concerts' financial records and the effects of World War One are extremely informative summaries. Another valuable portion of the book is the appendices, where Bartley has analysed the concert programmes of five suburban concert series, including 1006 of the South Place programmes, and produced the information in a series of tables.<sup>48</sup> The top ten composers at each concert series were very similar, the most popular at South Place being (from first to last): Beethoven, Brahms, Mozart, Dvorak, Schumann, Mendelssohn, Haydn, Walthew and Tchaikovsky. Another of Bartley's tables also shows the fifty most played individual works at South Place, which is a little more diverse and contains works by Franck, Stanford and Rheinberger. Whilst the traditional Austro-German repertoire predictably made up a large proportion of the repertoire at South Place, there was a weighty inclusion of challenging contemporary music and the Society represented a far larger number of international composers than many others. Out of the 1006 programmes Bartley studied, 409 composers were represented overall, compared to much lower numbers at the comparative concerts (albeit taken from fewer programmes). Furthermore, the South Place programmes contained a significantly higher proportion of British composers than the other concerts. 123 of the composers programmed were British, which Bartley has calculated as 30%, whereas the other concert series sit around 17%. Bartley discusses the absence of British composers in PCS concerts before the

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 73 – 79.

twentieth century and notes that the Society hardly represented even the more established names such as Stanford, Mackenzie and Macfarren, let alone the lesser known Frank Bridge (1879 – 1941) and Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875 – 1912). Bartley argues that not much should be read into this, because under-representation of British composers was common until the Edwardian period in London.<sup>49</sup> This is a fair assessment. At the Monday and Sunday Popular Concerts, British composers rarely featured, despite a successful concert in the first season presenting music by Henry Bishop, William Sterndale Bennett, George MacFarren, Andrew Glover, John Barnett, George Pinto, James William Davison, Edward Loder and Michael William Balfe.<sup>50</sup> In contrast, such names make regular appearances in the South Place programmes in the first one thousand concerts.

South Place was not totally unique in this respect. The Thomas Dunhill Concerts, launched in 1907 at Steinway Hall, also featured many British composers. Joseph Holbrooke, during his thirty-year concert series held at the Aeolian Hall and at Salle Erard, similarly championed his British contemporaries. However, out of the five concert series analysed by Bartley, South Place were the only series to have a British composer, Richard Walthew (1872 – 1951), in their top nine most regularly performed composers. Walthew was one of the most active musicians at South Place during this period; he performed at the concerts, conducted the orchestra, lectured on musical topics and helped with general organisation. Although Walthew achieved some success as a composer in the UK, his level of inclusion in the South Place programmes is highly disproportionate to other concert series in London.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, Bartley's findings show that at South Place, a musician's participation in the Society's activities could affect the amount of promotion they received from the Society in the concerts. It appears that this was a rare environment where a musician's religious and moral outlook (in this case as a radical free thinker) and the voluntary work they offered

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>50</sup> Ridgewell, Rupert. "St James Hall, the Monday and Saturday Popular Concerts." *Overview of the Nineteenth Century Collection*; and Nineteenth Century Collections Online. "Monday and Saturday Popular Concerts Programmes". Accessed 13 January 2018. <http://gdc.galegroup.com/gdc/ncco?p=NCCO&u=blibrary> Both accessed through the British Library. Also reported in *The Morning Post*, 26 April 1859, 5.

<sup>51</sup> Examples of concerts featuring work from SPES: Concert programmes: 8<sup>th</sup> concert of the 15<sup>th</sup> season, 25 November 1900; 10<sup>th</sup> concert of the 18<sup>th</sup> season, 6 December 1903; 11<sup>th</sup> concert of the 30<sup>th</sup> season, 12 December 1915; 14<sup>th</sup> concert of the 32<sup>nd</sup> season, 20 January 1918.

could aid their career as a serious composer or performer within that circle. Unfortunately, the other implication is that Walthew's success within the South Place community did not have much of an effect on his external visibility on a national level. The forthcoming chapters on Swebstone, Grimson and Troup will explore whether South Place had a similar effect on some of the women. In addition, whilst Bartley has mentioned the SPES's concert of music by women in 1915, Bartley neglects to comment any further on the significant presence of female performers and composers in the concerts, or the many women who assisted their organisation. This is where this thesis will build on Bartley's ground-breaking work by uncovering more of the musical history of the Society.

Whilst no other books focus exclusively on the history of the South Place concerts in this time frame, there is a wealth of literature regarding concert life in London and Britain for both the late Victorian and Edwardian periods. Leanne Langley has conducted projects about Victorian periodicals and society, and British women in orchestras during 1913. Her article from 1990 'The musical press in nineteenth-century England'<sup>52</sup> begins by stating that music historians have generally avoided Victorian England, which thanks to scholars such as herself is no longer the case. Her overview of nineteenth-century English musical journals and music reports in the general press are still useful. She considers the latter to be more interesting due to the remarkably high quality of writing that was produced, and what this tells us about the readership of these newspapers. She also provides guidance on how to approach the material. Her advice is that casual or impulsive searching is unlikely to produce a new synthesis of cultural ideas or an informed view of a complex musical period, so a systematic approach is imperative. For this thesis, such an approach has been attempted by starting with a relatively small section of the CHES archive and working outwards.

Simon McVeigh has contributed a vast amount of work regarding British concert life, largely focusing on the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. His work on the modernisation of concert life in London during the Edwardian era will be complemented by this research into the unexplored area of music at the ethical

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<sup>52</sup> Langley, Leanne. "The musical press in nineteenth-century England." *Notes*, 46, no.3 (March 1990): 583 – 592

societies during the same period.<sup>53</sup> His article about the first decade of the London Symphony Orchestra (LSO) from 1904 to 1914 is also relevant.<sup>54</sup> His archival-based research shows that there were similar attitudes towards music as a tool for social improvement within the orchestral scene, including ideas that a permanent orchestra was needed to perform throughout the year and to play to lower-class audiences 'because they have been educated to love it'.<sup>55</sup> Walter Bernhard also asserted that a permanent orchestra was the only way to allow native music to flourish, however McVeigh's research shows that the LSO was an exception to the 'English Musical Renaissance' narrative that has been associated with the Edwardian period by scholars such as Meirion Hughes, Robert Stradling and Calin Eatock.<sup>56</sup> The LSO records show that despite extra funding from a wealthy sponsor, programmes that featured modern British music mostly led to a financial loss for the concerts as they struggled to sell seats, and subsequently British music was regularly phased out in favour of Austro-German classics that attracted a larger audience. This is a striking comparison to the South Place concerts, which consistently programmed modern British composers throughout the first forty years. McVeigh's method of examining the financial records in particular detail in order to understand the repertoire of the LSO is one that has been emulated to some extent in relation to the South Place concerts in later chapters.

In respect to methodology, Christina Bashford is another scholar who has written extensively about British concert life, and produced an article titled 'Writing (British) Concert History: The Blessing and Curse of Ephemerality' that covers many of the methodological challenges that occur during archival research.<sup>57</sup> The article provides an important summary of journals and scholars that have been investigating concert histories in recent years (although this will now be slightly out of date) and categorises

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<sup>53</sup> Ehrlich, Cyril and McVeigh, Simon. "The Modernisation of London Concert Life around 1900." In: *The Business of Music*, edited by Michael Talbot, 96 – 120. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2002; and McVeigh, Simon. "'As the Sand on the Sea Shore': Women Violinists in London's Concert Life around 1900." In: *Essays on the History of English Music in Honour of John Caldwell*, edited by Emma Hornby and David Maw, 232 – 258. Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2010.

<sup>54</sup> McVeigh, Simon. "The London Symphony Orchestra: the First Decade Revisited." *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 138, no.2 (2013): 313-376.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 318. Note by McVeigh: The speech is reproduced in the Amalgamated Musicians' Union's *Musicians' Report and Journal*, March 1901, 1–4.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 313

<sup>57</sup> Bashford, Christina. "Writing (British) Concert History: The Blessing and Curse of Ephemerality." *Notes*, 64, no.3 (March 2008): 458 - 473



some of their lines of inquiry.<sup>58</sup> She distinguishes them as ranging from ‘the development of repertoire and patterns of taste to socioeconomic aspects of concert life, and from the functions and meanings that concerts had in people’s lives to the development of ideologies about music and codes of behaviour in the concert hall...’.<sup>59</sup> This thesis mostly falls under her category of the functions and meanings of music in people’s lives and the development of ideologies, through its investigation of how music affected members of the ethical movement. It is also concerned with the cultural aspects of concert life (rather than socioeconomic aspects), as it looks at how the musical life of the ethical movement reached beyond its own members.

Bashford identifies one of the main methodological difficulties as actually finding ephemera, a challenge that she describes as ‘at best perplexing, at worst defeating’,<sup>60</sup> which has very much been the case in this project regarding the missing programmes and music. To aid her reader, Bashford offers a list of ‘potentially powerful’ bibliographic projects that make it easier for researchers to locate material, such as the Concert Programmes Project directed by Rupert Ridgewell, which has been an incredibly useful tool in my own work.<sup>61</sup> An updated version of such resources would be useful for researchers in many fields that might require music-related sources. Like Langley, Bashford emphasises the merits of musical reviews in the general press, and encourages researchers to seek adverts and reports in their original formats, as a contextual understanding of the concerts is equally, if not more important, than finding the source itself. Bashford also covers the paradoxical issue of having too many primary sources available and the importance of selectivity. Both approaches were considered in the process of the research presented in this thesis. Aside from this article, her wider body of work has been highly influential in shaping the methodology of this project and providing a variety of lenses through which to consider nineteenth-century British music. In particular, her book *The Pursuit of High Culture: John Ella and Chamber Music in Victorian London* and her co-edited collection with Roberta

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<sup>58</sup> For example: Jenny Burchell; Rachel Cowgill; Cyril Ehrlich; Christopher Fifield; Leanne Langley; Meredith McFarlane; Alyson McLamore; Simon McVeigh; Michael Musgrave; Roz Southey; and David Wright.

<sup>59</sup> Bashford, “Writing (British) Concert History: The Blessing and Curse of Ephemera,” 458.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 461

<sup>61</sup> Ridgewell, Rupert. “Concert Programmes”. Accessed September 2018.  
<http://www.concertprogrammes.org.uk/>

Montemorra Marvin *The Idea of Art Music in a Commercial World, 1880 – 1930* have provided valuable context.<sup>62</sup>

Equally, Dave Russell's *Popular Music in England, 1840 – 1914: A Social History* looks at a different aspect of Victorian musical life, but one that is just as central to the music-making and attitudes that existed at South Place, especially outside of the concerts.<sup>63</sup> The book looks in detail at music at the music halls, somewhere that leaders of the ethical societies were trying to steer their members away from, towards engagement with musical genres that would be considered as self-improving rational recreation. Chapter 3 is particularly relevant as it explores the connection between music and morals between 1880 and 1914, which has close connections to the debates at South Place surrounding how and what music should be used to fulfil the Society's objectives. The 1880s saw a revival of public interest in 'music for the people', and this was linked to middle-class concerns about political unrest from the lower class.<sup>64</sup> Whilst working-class reform does not seem to have been the main concern of the concert committee, a focus on audience behaviour in their reports indicates that they were pleased to have an influence in this area. Russell also considers the rise of community music, including choral societies that emerged from organisations all over the country, including South Place. He discusses the social changes brought about by such developments in popular music, and how World War One and technological development disrupted the way that communities engaged with music in the twentieth century. Furthermore, Russell observes that the sexual divide was greater than the class divide in Victorian and Edwardian popular music, with women often playing a subservient role at musical events and representing a minority of the audience. Women who did achieve success as performers in music halls rarely escaped being judged for their sexuality more than for their musical talent. The case studies of this thesis will prove that women were given vastly different opportunities at South Place in all areas of their musical pursuits.

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<sup>62</sup> Bashford, Christina. *The Pursuit of High Culture: John Ella and Chamber Music in Victorian London*. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2007; and Bashford, Christina and Marvin, Roberta Montemorra (eds). *The Idea of Art Music in a Commercial World, 1800 – 1930*. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2016.

<sup>63</sup> Russell, Dave. *Popular Music in England, 1840 – 1914: A social history*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 18 and 33.

## 2.4 Musical Women in London

As the key purpose of this project is to reveal the role of the women musicians at South Place, the methodology and approach to the research is inescapably shaped by feminist musicology and existing work on historical women musicians. The past four decades have produced a wealth of literature in these fields, beginning with pioneering anthologies such as Carol Neuls-Bates' *Women In Music: An Anthology of Source Readings from the Middle Ages to the Present* (1982), Jane Bower's and Judith Tick's *Women Making Music: The Western Art Tradition, 1150-1950* (1987) and Karin Pendle's *Women and Music: A History* (1991).<sup>65</sup> In her chapter 'Gender, Musicology, and Feminism' in *Rethinking Musicology*, Suzanne Cusick clearly defines two strands of feminist musicology, distinguished by two key questions: '(1) where are the women in music, in music's history? and (2) what are the representations of women in music, in the music we love and continually re-canonize in our performances, our teaching, our speaking and writing about music?'<sup>66</sup> This research attempts to contribute an answer to the former question, by bringing to the foreground the women musicians of South Place who over the last century have been nearly entirely forgotten. Cusick's second question lies beyond the scope of this project, particularly as most of the music discussed in this project would not be considered canonic repertoire. In another evaluation of the field, in 2007 Marcia Citron wrote an essay that reflected on her influential book *Gender and the Musical Canon* (1993). One of Citron's observations in 'Women and the Western Art Canon: Where are we now?' is that in the fifteen years between these two texts, much more of women's music was assimilated into the standard repertoire through the large number of recordings, scores and performances that occurred, and the music must continue to be emphasised.<sup>67</sup> She also discusses how musicological work on women and gender has become thoroughly assimilated into the field and tends to be integrated into other topics, suggesting that the topic of women has now been 'decentered' and integrated into musicology at large.<sup>68</sup> Whilst

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<sup>65</sup> Neuls-Bates, Carol, *Women In Music: An Anthology of Source Readings from the Middle Ages to the Present*, (London: Harper & Row, 1982); Bowers, Jane M., and Tick, Judith (eds), *Women Making Music: The Western Art Tradition 1150 – 1950*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986); and Pendle, Karin, *Women and Music: A History*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991).

<sup>66</sup> Cusick, Suzanne G. "Gender, Musicology, and Feminism," in *Rethinking Music*, Reprint: edited by Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 482.

<sup>67</sup> Citron, Marcia, "Women and the Western Art Canon: Where are we now?" *Notes*, 64, no.2 (December 2007): 213.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 213-14

this is true for much work that discusses historical musical women in the context of more thoroughly explored musical spaces, South Place and the British ethical movement are historical situations where women musicians have yet to be 'centred'. Therefore, it is important that this thesis places the female composers, performers and organisers at the core of the discussion. It is only once these women have been brought to the foreground that they can then be 'decentered' and reintegrated into future texts about musicology or social and cultural histories of Victorian and Edwardian London.

Among scholars who have already centralised the work of many women composers from this period into musicology is Sophie Fuller. *The Pandora Guide to Women Composers: Britain and the United States 1629 – Present* provides an informative overview of what women have achieved in various times and contexts.<sup>69</sup> Her doctoral thesis *Women Composers during the British Musical Renaissance, 1880 – 1918* has been a model on which this thesis has been based: the first half tackling underexplored moments in women's musical history that give context and support to the set of case studies that make up the second half of the thesis.<sup>70</sup> Fuller's chapters on 'Women as Musicians' and 'Women as Composers' have been essential in placing the women discussed in this thesis into context of their time and place. Her studies of Maude Valérie White, Liza Lehmann and Frances Allitsen will be drawn upon in more detail in Chapter 5, in order to discuss these women's connections to the South Place concerts and how they relate to other composers in the programmes. Derek Hyde's *New Found Voices: Women in Nineteenth Century English Music* also covers a broad range of perspectives on the life of Victorian women musicians, and references two of South Place's foremost women musicians, the Flower sisters (returned to in Chapter 3).<sup>71</sup> Although Hyde, Fuller and several others have already looked at such contexts in detail, elements of these narratives will be retraced in this chapter for the reader who has approached this thesis from a non-musicological perspective with an interest in Conway Hall's feminist history.

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<sup>69</sup> Fuller, Sophie, *The Pandora Guide to Women Composers: Britain and the United States 1629 – Present* (London: Pandora, 1994).

<sup>70</sup> Fuller, Sophie, "Women composers during the British musical renaissance, 1880 – 1918" (PhD diss., King's College University of London, 1998).

<sup>71</sup> Hyde, Derek, *New Found Voices: Women in Nineteenth Century English Music*. Reprint. (Kent: Tritone Music Publications, 1991).

More recently, Fuller contributed the chapter 'Women musicians and professionalism in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries' to Rosemary Golding's edited collection *The Music Profession in Britain, 1780 – 1920: New Perspectives on Status and Identity*.<sup>72</sup> Here, Fuller examines the careers of three little-known women musicians with differing musical careers to uncover the blurred boundaries between amateur and professional status for women musicians in London during this period. The forthcoming examination of how musicians and composers were treated at South Place will further support this argument. The dichotomy between public and private life was another issue that faced many women during this period. In another key text from the relatively early years of feminist musicology *Cecilia Reclaimed: Feminist Perspectives on Gender and Music*, Jennifer C. Post grapples with this issue with regards to women musicians, which will be returned to in Chapter 5.<sup>73</sup> As a large aspect of women's music making at South Place was related to the composing, compiling and performance of hymns, literature specifically related to hymn writing has been considered. Janet Wootton's *This Is Our Song: Women's Hymn-Writing* examines the output of ten contemporary women, which is introduced with an historical overview of the contributions women have made in this area.<sup>74</sup> Especially relevant is her chapter on women's hymn writing linked to the political and social revolutions of the nineteenth century, which show how hymn writing came to have a wider importance and in some ways became separated from religion. Engagement with hymns at the South Place Chapel went through a similar transition. Wootton also looks specifically at children's hymns and their use in Sunday schools, which is drawn on in relation to Troup's large output of compositions in this genre. Alisa Clapp-Itnyre has also written about this in her book *British Hymn Books for Children, 1800 – 1900: Re-Tuning the history of Childhood*. Her work has become part of a larger digital project, *Sounding Victorian*, which is being developed by a group of academics (directed by Fuller and Weliver) to make the sounds of Victorian Britain more easily accessible to a range of audiences.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Golding, Rosemary (ed.), *The Music Profession in Britain, 1780 – 1920* (Routledge: London, 2018).

<sup>73</sup> Cook, Susan C. and Tsou, Judy S. (eds.), *Cecilia Reclaimed: Feminist Perspectives on Gender and Music* (Illinois: The University of Illinois Press, 1994).

<sup>74</sup> Wootton, Janet, *This is Our Song: Women's Hymn-Writing*. Reprint. (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2012).

<sup>75</sup> Fuller, Sophie and Weliver, Phyllis. "Sounding Victorian." Accessed October 2018. <http://www.soundingvictorian.org>

In respect to this project's focus on little known instrumental works by women composers from this period, Laura Seddon's recent publication *British Women Composers and Instrumental Chamber Music in the Early Twentieth Century* is one of the most relevant texts.<sup>76</sup> Much of the archival material consulted for Seddon's book has also been used for this thesis, including the focus of her research on the Society of Women Musicians (SWM) archive held at the RCM. Seddon has also researched the presence of women in the South Place concerts and claimed that they helped to progress women's positions in the chamber music world.<sup>77</sup> As I have had much greater access to the archive and the programmes, this thesis is able to substantiate and nuance these claims even further. A few additions can be made to her table of instrumental works composed by women that featured in the South Place concerts (see Table 4 in Chapter 6).

The first and second chapters of Seddon's book clarify why it is still relevant to focus on historical composers in terms of gender in the twenty-first century, and situate the position of women composers in the Edwardian period and the years surrounding World War One. Between 1887 and 1927, the opportunities for musical women developed at a rapid pace, particularly with regards to education. Although colleges such as the Royal Academy of Music accepted women as composition students from the beginning, a higher proportion mainly studied performance, either in singing, violin or piano. By the 1920s it had become more common for women to study composition, although still rarely as a first subject.<sup>78</sup> Bartley's chapter 'Introducing music for all' helps to explain how music became more accessible to women and the working classes through the rise in cheap public concerts, the introduction of John Curwen's Tonic Sol-fa method and the integration of singing into education and recreational activities.<sup>79</sup> Nevertheless, it was mostly women from middle- and upper-class backgrounds who could afford to study music in higher education. Seddon identifies many of the social and cultural factors that meant that women composers still faced several obstacles despite this opportunity. This includes the expectation for it to be kept as a private

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<sup>76</sup> Seddon, Laura, *British Women Composers and Instrumental Chamber Music in the Early Twentieth Century* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013).

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 53

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 - 25

<sup>79</sup> Bartley, *Far from the Fashionable Crowd*, 36 – 61.

practice, at risk of being labelled an unmarriedable 'blue-stocking' in becoming a professional. Marriage and motherhood also presented challenges. Despite the barriers, many women in this era went on to have professional careers in music, mostly as performers of violin, piano and singing, but there were many who achieved successful careers as composers, concert organisers and wind instrument performers. There were even a few notable examples who were known as conductors, such as Gwynne Kimpton (at West Dulwich), Rosabel Watson (of the Aeolian Ladies Orchestra) and Florence Marshall (of the South Hampstead Orchestra). This is even more astounding considering the lack of prominent female conductors around in the twenty-first century, although a number of programmes have been set up in the past few years to attempt to readdress the balance.<sup>80</sup>

Chapter three of Seddon's book looks at the first nine years of the SWM's existence and helpfully identifies the main influencers within that circle and the aims of the organisation. Seddon also provides some suggestions as to why some women were not attracted to the Society. Particularly compelling are her comparisons between the SWM and the suffragettes, who were not directly linked but had similarities: both held regular meetings, campaigned for new members and distributed propaganda. Seddon also likens leading SWM member Katherine Eggar's speech about the importance for women to pursue intellectual interests and the type of musical works that they should produce, to a 'war cry' speech by a suffragette.<sup>81</sup> Eggar's argument ironically produces an expectation on women to produce a particular type of work. She also held opinions about people trying to improve themselves through intellectual activities, with a particular reference to music, and her thoughts resonate with many of the opinions held by South Place members about the improving power of engaging with classical music. Furthermore, whilst musical analysis is not the focus of this thesis, Seddon's analyses of works by Adela Maddison, Ethel Smyth, Morfydd Owen, Ethel Barns, Alice Verne-Bredt and Susan Spain-Dunk, are good examples of how women's chamber work from this period can be analysed, and provide some insight into the musical

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<sup>80</sup> This short article by the Royal Philharmonic Society offers statistics from 2019 on representation of women conductors in Britain and provides links to courses aimed specifically at aspiring female conductors: Royal Philharmonic Society. "Women Conductors". Accessed August 2019. <https://royalphilharmonicsociety.org.uk/performers/women-conductors>

<sup>81</sup> In the same speech, however, Eggar attempted to highlight the differences between the two groups. Seddon, *British Women Composers and Instrumental Chamber Music in the Early Twentieth Century*, 69.

styles of composers whose instrumental work and songs featured at the South Place concerts throughout its earlier years.

Despite the progress being made throughout the nineteenth century, attitudes towards women composers during this period were still overwhelmingly negative. For example, Anton Rubinstein saw the rise of female musicians as a sign of 'the decline of his art'.<sup>82</sup> Even as late as the 1940s, Sir Thomas Beecham wrote that the result of women's increased participation in the music profession during the previous three decades or so had inevitably brought music to 'a state of hopeless decadence... There are no women composers, never have been and possibly never will be'.<sup>83</sup> Even though such thoughts were not shared by everyone, statements by such prolific figures in the British classical music scene certainly influenced the way in which women composers were perceived at the time and the level to which their work was preserved. In 1903, Arthur Elson published a pioneering book called *Woman's Work on Music*, which advocated the musical contributions of women on an international and historically broad scale. In his chapter on England, Elson references many women whose work was performed at South Place as notable contemporary composers, including Swebstone and Troup, showing that they had both become fairly well known by this point. Unfortunately, the forward-looking nature of his book is unravelled in his final chapter. Despite noting that women had likely not reached the same levels of fame as 'the tonal giants among men', because they had not been given the same opportunities, he is left undecided over whether women's work in music will ever match their male counterparts, and believes the distinction in character in their music will be a permanent one. Elson states: 'The average sweet girl graduate of the conservatories, who is made up chiefly of sentiment, and hates mathematics, will hardly make a very deep mark in any art'. He also expresses a common belief that women's music has more 'delicate grace' than a man's, but will always lack strength. However, in many ways Elson was a champion of women's music, and he does conclude by expressing his wish that the compositions of women composers could be heard more frequently.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Rubinstein, Anton, "Occasional Notes." *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, 33, no. 590 (April 1892): 208.

<sup>83</sup> Gillett, Paula, *Musical Women in England, 1870 – 1914: 'Encroaching on all Man's Privileges'* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), 31.

<sup>84</sup> Elson, Arthur, *Woman's Work in Music* (Boston: Colonial Press, 1903), 242.



Similarly, in *Cobbett's Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music*, first published in 1929, a two page entry on 'Women Composers' by M. Drake-Brockman opens with 'No woman composer possessing the originality of a Beethoven or a Schumann has yet arisen; indeed there has been, so far, no feminine counterpart to even the lesser masters'.<sup>85</sup> In this instance Troup is not mentioned, but Sweptstone is listed in the reference book, and the notion of originality mentioned in Drake-Brockman's text will return in Chapter 6 in relation to her work. The entry is supplemented with a note by the editor, Walter Willson Cobbett, who during his life commissioned many chamber works by British composers and awarded one of his prizes to Alice Verne-Bredt (1864 – 1958) in 1908. Cobbett compares the success of women writers and the relative underachievement of women composers, who he believes will only achieve 'genius' status when one composes not as a woman 'pranked in male garb, but as a woman true to her own nature'.<sup>86</sup> Regarding such comparisons, Talia Schaffer's book *The Forgotten Female Aesthetes: Literary Culture in Late-Victorian England* offers an overview of the opportunities and challenges women writers were facing during this period, which is particularly relevant when considering Troup, who wrote in various forms as well as composing and performing.<sup>87</sup> Likewise, Clarissa Campbell Orr's book *Women in the Victorian Art World* looks at the position of women artists who came from a variety of different social and economic backgrounds.<sup>88</sup> As well as looking at their artistic contemporaries, it is important to consider the women musicians at South Place in the context of the concept of 'the new woman' that emerged during the late nineteenth century, perhaps more so than when writing about women in the concert hall, as South Place was a space where there were regular conversations about feminism and the status of women. Sally Ledger's definitive text *The New Woman* reflects on the multiple identities that made up the fictional construct of the new woman.<sup>89</sup> She lists characteristics such as 'activist' and 'reformer' and artistic qualities

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<sup>85</sup> Drake-Brockman, M. "Women Composers," in Cobbett, Walter, Willson. *Cobbett's Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music: Volume II*. Reprint. by Colin Mason (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 591.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 593

<sup>87</sup> Schaffer, Talia, *The Forgotten Female Aesthetes: Literary Culture in Late-Victorian England* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000).

<sup>88</sup> Campbell Orr, Clarissa, *Women in the Victorian Art World* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995).

<sup>89</sup> Ledger, Sally, *The New Woman* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1977).

that would have resonated with women at various points in South Place's history.<sup>90</sup> Musical women such as Troup, who also had a demonstrable passion for literature and social movements, would undoubtedly have been shaped by the phenomenon, even if they did not directly engage with it. Having examined the image of 'the new woman' crafted through nineteenth-century fiction, Elizabeth Morgan has considered how 'the new woman' was portrayed through the music of women composers.<sup>91</sup> She also explains that by working as a piano teacher and a composer, women such as Maria Hester Park carved out a space in her career that was both public (in the concert hall) and private (in the more feminised role of teaching).<sup>92</sup> As women musicians took on supposed public and private roles at South Place, they also took on the qualities of independence, reason and social progression that were connected to this new feminist ideal.

Whilst it was generally difficult for a woman to be taken seriously as a composer of instrumental works at this time, attitudes towards women as performers developed at a dramatically different rate. It was already normal for lower-class women to work as professional performers. However, throughout the nineteenth century it became more desirable for middle- and upper-class women to become proficient singers, pianists or violinists. There were still many barriers, particularly for women interested in learning other instruments that may have been considered 'unfeminine', such as the cello or wind instruments. Henry Wood had a relatively progressive view towards women musicians and was the first person to allow women performers into a mainstream professional orchestra. Yet even he did not allow women to play in the Proms concerts until 1913 as it was considered too gruelling. Cobbett, however, regarded female performers on a much higher level than their composer colleagues, stating: 'it is as interpreter, rather than as composer, that Woman has won her place among the elite'.<sup>93</sup> Simon McVeigh has noted the rise of female violinists throughout this period and considered the factors that influenced the phenomenon, in a chapter that was part of Emma Hornby and David Maw's *Essays on the History of English Music in*

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 1

<sup>91</sup> Morgan, Elizabeth. "The Accompanied Sonata and the Domestic Novel in Britain at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century." *19<sup>th</sup>-Century Music*, 36, no. 2 (Autumn 2012): 88 – 100.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 93

<sup>93</sup> Cobbett, *Cobbett's Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music*, 593.

*Honour of John Caldwell*.<sup>94</sup> In his chapter “‘As the Sand on the Sea Shore’: Women Violinists in London’s Concert Life around 1900”, McVeigh writes about many of the musicians who performed at South Place, including Jessie Grimson and her ensembles. Chapter 7 of this thesis will build on McVeigh’s work by looking more closely at how her association with South Place shaped her career. McVeigh also contributed to Golding’s recent publication with the chapter ‘Building a concert career in Edwardian London’.<sup>95</sup> Notably in this chapter he focuses on other violinists who were prominent in the South Place concerts, mainly the Chaplin sisters and Myra Hess. Again, these women will be returned to in Chapter 7 to look in more detail at their associations with South Place.

Finally, Paula Gillett’s *Musical Women in England, 1870 – 1914: Encroaching on all man’s privileges* also adds important information to the rest of this thesis.<sup>96</sup> Gillett’s distinctive second chapter considers the role of the women musicians in organising the philanthropic concerts that existed all over London. Many of these were organised, led, supported and executed by upper and middle-class women, who saw the concerts as an opportunity to use their musical skills developed throughout their youth in order to become desirable young women, as well as a way of acting in what they considered to be a socially responsible way. A number of concert series were established in the late nineteenth century under this umbrella, although each with nuanced objectives. Whilst upper-class women were not the only ones to thank for the musical activities at South Place, the following chapters will identify how vital women’s contributions were to the Society’s musical success.

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<sup>94</sup> McVeigh, Simon. “‘As the Sand on the Sea Shore’: Women Violinists in London’s Concert Life around 1900.” In: *Essays on the History of English Music in Honour of John Caldwell*, edited by Emma Hornby and David Maw, 232 – 258. Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2010.

<sup>95</sup> McVeigh, Simon, “Building a Concert Career in Edwardian London,” in *The Music Profession in Britain, 1780 – 1920* edited by Rosemary Golding (Routledge: London, 2018), 189 – 220.

<sup>96</sup> Gillett, *Musical Women in England, 1870 – 1914: ‘Encroaching on all Man’s Privileges’*, 2000.

### **3.1 Introduction**

The principal aim of this chapter is to provide an overview of the Society from an alternative perspective to those already available. There are several books that give a general historical account of South Place. An early example is *The Centenary History of the South Place Society*, written by Moncure Conway based on four lectures given at the chapel in 1893.<sup>97</sup> This was followed by *The Story of South Place* by S. K. Ratcliffe published in 1955, and much more recently Herrick's *Aspiring to the Truth: Two Hundred Years of the South Place Ethical Society* (2016).<sup>98</sup> None of these completely ignores the contributions of women. The first two both discuss the relationship between the Flower sisters and Fox and their creative contributions to the Chapel. Ratcliffe also makes a passing reference to Josephine Troup for her musical and financial contributions.<sup>99</sup> Conway also wrote a paragraph about the women who spoke at the pulpit between 1869 and 1893.<sup>100</sup> Herrick reprints Nicolas Walter's paragraph about the underrepresentation of women in current histories of the Society, and throughout the book makes an effort to weave women into the narrative, complementing this with a noticeable increase in pictures of women compared to other books. This chapter will put an even greater emphasis on following the trajectory of the women who have moulded the way the Society has developed since it began. To help put this into context of the more general history of the Society, which in some ways has changed dramatically in the last two centuries, Table 1 provides an overview of the core structures of the Society from its conception until the present day. The most significant changes that occurred between 1887 and 1927 are the changes in movement, doctrine and leadership, which coincided with the introduction of the concerts. However, the rest of this chapter will start from the beginning of the Society's history before discussing this period of heavy transition, and end at the point where they left the South Place Chapel and moved to Conway Hall in 1927.

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<sup>97</sup> Conway, Moncure D., *The Centenary History of the South Place Society* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1894).

<sup>98</sup> Ratcliffe, Samuel K., *The Story of South Place* (London: Watts & Co., 1955); and Herrick, Jim, *Aspiring to the Truth: Two Hundred Years of the South Place Ethical Society* (London: Conway Hall Ethical Society, 2016).

<sup>99</sup> Ratcliffe, *The Story of South Place*, 49.

<sup>100</sup> Conway, *The Centenary History of the South Place Society*, 110 – 111.

Table 1 - Timeline of Conway Hall's History.<sup>101</sup>

Date	Name	Leaders	Location	Doctrine	Movement	Music			
1787	The Philadelphians	Winchester and Vidler	London	Universalism	Christian	Hymns, choir and other musical activities			
1793	Finsbury Unitarian Congregation		Parliament Court Chapel	Unitarianism					
1802									
1816		Fox	South Place Chapel	Free religion	Independent				
1824	South Place Institute/Finsbury Unitarian Chapel	Ierson and Barnett							
1835			Conway	Theism - Humanism					
1853									
1864									
1879	South Place Religious Society					PCS start concerts			
1880						South Place take over concerts			
1887						1000 <sup>th</sup> concert			
1888	South Place Ethical Society	Coit	Conway Hall	Ethical Humanism	Ethical and Humanist	Stopped singing hymns			
1892		Conway							
1900		Appointed Lecturers							
1927									
1929									
1961		General Secretaries							
1966									
1969		Honorary Reps							
1981									
2012	Conway Hall Ethical Society								2000 <sup>th</sup> concert

### 3.2 The Early Years

The formation of Conway Hall Ethical Society dates back to 1787, when American preacher Elhanan Winchester (1751 – 1797) moved to England, where he hoped that his heretical beliefs would be more widely accepted than at his previous post at a church in Philadelphia. An anecdote recounting his conversion from Calvinism to Universalism is worth noting as an acknowledgement of the ways in which women have influenced the Society's history from the beginning. During a journey in a stagecoach, Winchester was speaking about his beliefs about eternal damnation, when a young woman interrupted him. She believed in salvation for all and claimed that the God she worshipped was one of wisdom and compassion, not cruelty and vengeance.<sup>102</sup> It was this encounter that influenced Winchester's outlook and encouraged him to establish his own dissident congregation in London. By 1793,

<sup>101</sup> Most information for this table was gathered from Herrick, Jim, *Aspiring to the Truth: Two Hundred Years of the South Place Ethical Society* (London: Conway Hall Ethical Society, 2016).

<sup>102</sup> Ratcliffe, Samuel K. "The Story of South Place 1793 – 1952" Last modified 16 September 2014. Accessed July 2018. <https://conwayhall.org.uk/ethicalrecord/the-story-of-south-place-1793-1952/>

Winchester and his adherents had established their first centre in Bishopsgate. He became a popular preacher and writer, whose tracts were circulated throughout the country. In addition, he wrote over 230 hymns, kick-starting the Society's abundant musical history.

Only eighteen months after his work at Bishopsgate had begun, Winchester was obliged to return to America due to domestic difficulties. His successor, William Vidler (1758 - 1816) took the congregation into a new direction. Initially, he was recognised as a leader of Universalists, but by the end of the century was prominent among religious Liberals and was moving towards Unitarianism.<sup>103</sup> The rejection of the Trinity caused many of the wealthy members of the congregation to leave in disagreement with this attitude; however his reputation as a great minister restored the numbers of the congregation. In 1802, under Vidler's direction, the Society finally made a complete break with the orthodox, officially renaming themselves as the 'Philadelphians', after Winchester's influence. After Vidler died in 1816, his passion and vision were continued, until 1853, by the previous minister of a Unitarian chapel in Chichester, William Johnson Fox (1786 – 1864).<sup>104</sup>

Within a few years of his leadership, Fox had already caused controversy by protesting against Richard Carlile's prosecution for selling *The Age of Reason*, yet his natural ability as an orator and popularity among the radicals of London meant that the chapel prospered. He soon had a steady following of progressive thinkers and it was agreed that a new building was needed for the Society. A site in Finsbury was chosen for only £600 and the South Place Chapel was completed by February 1824, home to the newly named 'South Place Unitarian Society', dedicated to the worship of freedom and virtue. During its first decade, South Place Chapel was the site of many Unitarian events and a hub of intellectual activity, which reflected the wide range of radical causes being debated. Fox used the platform to publicise his thoughts on matters such as popular education, the civil rights of Roman Catholics and Jews, the grievances of Dissenters, and his campaign about the Corn Laws. He also supported women's suffrage through his support for issues such as education, infant custody, marriage and

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>104</sup> Webb, R. K., "Fox, William Johnson" in *Dictionary of National Biography*, May 2009.

divorce. In later years, the social scientist John A. Hobson (1858 – 1940) gave a lecture about Fox's thoughts on women's suffrage, quoting significant passages of Fox's own writing.<sup>105</sup>

It was normal for politically engaged institutions to host large dinners to celebrate important events and South Place was gratifyingly noted for allowing women to be invited as dinner guests.<sup>106</sup> In 1831, another significant moment in the Society's feminist history occurred, when Harriet Martineau (1802 – 76) was announced as the winner of three essay prizes offered by the Association. This early success helped to launch her career in London and led to her becoming a standby for Fox at the chapel on many occasions. The pair also worked together through *The Monthly Repository*, for which Martineau wrote and Fox edited, and in 1833 Martineau described Fox in a letter to M. B. Maurice as 'after my brother James, the steadiest friend and the best guide that I have ever had in literature and philosophy'.<sup>107</sup> Martineau campaigned for women's equality and was the author of many hymns that appeared in *Hymns and Anthems*, as well as other collections including *A Collection of Hymns for Christian Worship* (1831), *J. R. Beard's Collection* (1837) and the *Christian Science Hymnal* (1937).<sup>108</sup> Although she was more influential through her activism, her links to the hymns tie her to both central elements of this thesis.

### 3.3 The Flower Sisters

Two other women from this period hold a notable position in Conway Hall's history and have links to music and feminism. Printer and activist, Benjamin Flower, was a good friend of William J Fox. He had two daughters, Eliza (1803 – 1846) and Sarah (1805 – 1848), who, like Harriet Martineau, were raised with a strict Unitarian upbringing. When their father died in 1829, the two young women were taken under Fox's wing and applied their talents to the development of South Place. Both daughters were well educated and artistic; Eliza was a musician who composed from

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<sup>105</sup> Hobson, John, "Mr W. J. Fox on woman suffrage." *South Place Magazine* 13, no.6 (February 1908): 98 – 101.

<sup>106</sup> Ratcliffe, "The Story of South Place 1793 – 1952"

<sup>107</sup> Boucher-Rivallain, Odile. "Harriet Martineau (1802–1876), from Unitarianism to Agnosticism." *Cahiers victoriens et édouardiens*, 76, (Autumn 2012): 27–43. See *Monthly Repository*, August 1833, 613–614, for a list of Martineau's contributions.

<sup>108</sup> Claghorn, Gene, *Women Composers and Hymnists: A Concise Biographical Dictionary* (London: The Scarecrow Press, 1984).

childhood, and Sarah was a writer. Together they eventually led the musical portion of the South Place services and produced a substantial creative output. Derek Hyde acknowledged a whole concert of Eliza Flower's sacred music that was given at Crosby Hall in 1845, indicating her popularity. Sarah Flower most famously wrote the words for the hymn 'Nearer, my God to thee', initially set to music by Eliza. (The best known version composed by Lowell Mason in 1856 was reputedly the last piece of music played on the Titanic, a detail replicated in the 1998 film.) Both women were supporters of women's equality and influenced Fox in his support of suffrage campaigns.<sup>109</sup> Sarah also made a lasting impression on Fox, when she confided in him that an encounter with the major poet Robert Browning (1812 – 89) had led to religious doubts over the genuineness of the Scriptures. According to Moncure Conway, this hastened Fox's own inquiries and gradual departure from formal Unitarianism.

It was Eliza Flower, however, who had the biggest influence over Fox's life and career, which most directly influenced the direction that South Place took during Fox's time as minister. When Eliza came under Fox's guardianship aged 26, she became a perfect secretary, assisting him in work such as taking dictation and transcribing short hand. Fox's biographer, Richard Garnett, goes as far as to say that without Eliza's assistance, Fox would never have become known outside of South Place.<sup>110</sup> Although this may be an extreme view, it is fair to say that Eliza's relationship with Fox did have a significant effect on South Place. As Fox came to fully rely on Eliza for her help and devotion, it was eventually decided by Fox that he and his wife should have a public separation, and it became Eliza's role to take care of the household and children. Controversy over Fox's apparent attitude to marriage motivated Fox to give six months' notice to quit his position at South Place, but a large majority requested him to withdraw his resignation. Tensions within the congregation caused him to change his ministerial style, reducing his duties to the congregation members' households and losing the sermonic tone from his public discourses.<sup>111</sup> Whilst his decisions lost him some supporters, on the whole the departure from his denominational roots was welcomed

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<sup>109</sup> Seyler, Clarence H., "The first century of the existence of the South Place Society." *South Place Magazine* 1, no.10, (January 1896): 83- 4.

<sup>110</sup> Ratcliffe, "The Story of South Place 1793 – 1952"

<sup>111</sup> Ratcliffe, "The Story of South Place 1793 – 1952"



and subsequently Fox continued to rise in popularity, particularly as a literary and public figure.

Meanwhile, Eliza Flower lost many friends, including Harriet Martineau, and ceased to attend the South Place meetings and choir rehearsals. Nevertheless, after some time had passed she was welcomed back and continued to lead the musical activities of the chapel with her sister for the rest of their lives. In print, their most substantial contributions were their work submitted to the *Monthly Repository* and their collaborative project with Fox to produce a new hymn book for South Place in 1841, *Hymns and Anthems*.<sup>112</sup> Alongside their publications in the magazine are stories, poems and essays written by Sarah Flower under the pseudonym S.Y., as well as song and hymn settings by Eliza. Their literary and musical efforts were often combined, for example in a collection of songs published in each issue of 1834, inspired by the respective month of the edition. At the end of the year, these were edited into a collection called *Songs of the Months: A Musical Garland* and published by Novello.<sup>113</sup> Although the composer's name is not explicitly included, a note saying 'The music by the author of "The Waverley Novels" (a reference to her musical settings of extracts from Scott's famous novel series), "Songs of the Seasons" and "Hymn of the Polish Exiles"' confirms Eliza Flower as the composer to those who knew her other work.<sup>114</sup>

In *Songs of the Months*, five sets of lyrics are attributed to Sarah F. Adams (whose name changed after she married railway engineer William Bridges Adams in 1834). Three more were written by Charles Pemberton and one was by Alexander Hume. The remaining three, 'June', 'August' and 'September', were written by Catherine Partridge, Harriet Martineau and Mary Howitt, a group of women who were all likely or confirmed acquaintances of the Flower sisters. The brief introduction to the collection is itself rather poetical, describing the songs as: 'a musical garland for the hoary head of Time, a welcome for his comings, a benediction on his goings, and a

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<sup>112</sup> Fox, William J. *Hymns and Anthems for the use of South Place Ethical Society (Selected in 1889 from 1841 edition)*. London: South Place Chapel, 1890. Conway Hall Library: 782.4HYM

<sup>113</sup> Flower, Eliza, *Songs of the Months: A Musical Garland* (London: J. A. Novello, 1834).

<sup>114</sup> Derek Hyde describes her *Musical Illustrations to the Waverley Novels* (1831) as her best-known and ambitious sets. Hyde, *New Found Voices*, 63 – 4.

march to quicken his steps when the road is thorny and toilsome'.<sup>115</sup> The writer, presumably Eliza Flower or her sister, clearly had high expectations for the collection, as it is hoped that if the songs came into regular use that 'while voices keep tune', hearts will not lose time, but sustain this perennial chaunt of affection, enjoyment and hope, which prolongs the good wishes of the season from a happy new year to a merry Christmas'.<sup>116</sup> Such an aspiring statement indicates that it was hoped that this collection of songs might become embedded in the year in the same way as a popular Christmas carol. This aim was reinforced by the renowned philosopher, John Stuart Mill (1806 – 73), through his support of the songs in the *Examiner*. His descriptions of the 'elegant and graceful duet' in 'September' and the 'sweet, ample ballad' of 'May' are accurate, and his description of Sarah and Eliza's settings of 'October', 'November' and 'July' as being of 'consummate beauty' may be fair. However, it was possibly a stretch to define the works as 'among the most impressive and elevated compositions which have recently appeared'.<sup>117</sup> Mill's comment on the 'elevated' nature of the hymns alludes to a comparison between the affective forms of sacred writing and how this was manifested in secular songs, and the goals of the secular chapels to elevate and inspire its members. Moreover, Mill and his partner, the women's rights advocate Harriet Taylor (1807 – 1858), were friends with Eliza and William, so his praise of the music and of the 'excellent and perpetually improving periodical' in which the songs first appeared is unsurprising, particularly as Mill and Taylor also wrote and reviewed for the *Monthly Repository* on occasion.<sup>118</sup> This attempt to create a new set of largely secular liturgical music for use at the chapel pre-empts the hymn books compiled by Josephine Troup and others later in the nineteenth century. 'The Harvests of Time', written by Martineau for the month of August, later became known by its opening line 'Beneath this starry arch' and was sung regularly at the Sunday services during any month of the year.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Flower, Eliza, *Songs of the Months: A Musical Garland*, 1.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Mill, John Stuart, "Flower's Songs of the Months", *Examiner* (4 January 1835): 4.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> For example:

6 December 1896 (Reynolds, W. J. (ed.). *South Place Magazine*, 2, no.3 (December 1896), 1);

9 November 1898 (Reynolds, W. J. (ed.). *South Place Magazine*, 4, no.1 (October 1898), 1);

25 Feb 1900, (Reynolds, W. J. (ed.). *South Place Magazine*, 5, no.5 (February 1900), 1);

26 January 1902 (Reynolds, W. J. (ed.). *South Place Magazine*, 7, no.4 (January 1902), 1);

7 December 1902 (Reynolds, W. J. (ed.). *South Place Magazine*, 8, no.3 (December 1902), 1.

It is significant that Mill writes that he hopes for the sale of the songs to bring ample remuneration to the editor of the magazine, rather than the composer or writers who arguably should have been receiving the majority of the fee and reward; this is another case of women's creative labour being marginalised and unrewarded. Furthermore, while he may not have had sufficient space in his article to list all of the writers, it is conspicuous that although he references 'the composer' several times, he never mentions Eliza Flower by name. This seems curious, particularly as it is recorded that he was an admirer of her intellect and abilities, and it is perhaps especially problematic on the basis that the collection was clearly seen as having the potential to benefit the chapel through its commercial value. Flower's name is also not printed in the collection itself, only alluded to, which may be an example of a typical trait of a nineteenth-century woman leaving her work unacknowledged, either as a matter of modesty or as an attempt for the work not to be defined as 'woman's work'. Either way, the complete absence of Eliza's name in reference to the collection, along with her sister's use of a pseudonym, is probably not the earliest example of a tradition of creative women at South Place who have hidden from view and been denied their deserved recognition.

In 1897, one of the early music directors of South Place, C. D. Collett, contributed an article to the *South Place Magazine* titled 'The Music at South Place under Mr Fox's Ministry'.<sup>120</sup> He writes that in the early 1830s, most other Unitarian and Nonconformist services included hymns that were sung in unison by the whole congregation, led by a tenor singer who was called the clerk. Hymn books, such as Edward Taylor's collection, were available with harmonised writing, but it was amateurs who sang the parts from their seats. However, later in the decade, Eliza Flower induced a musical reformation at the services that 'rivalled the attraction to the chapel of its excellent minister'.<sup>121</sup> After surprising a large congregation at an important funeral with a new anthem performed by an external choir, a South Place choir was quickly set up and led by Eliza Flower. The choir was then able to lead the rest of the congregation during services and their Sunday evening rehearsals gave

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<sup>120</sup> Collet, C. D., "The Musical at South Place Under Mr Fox's Ministry, from 1841 – 1852." *South Place Magazine* 2, no.12 (September 1897): 184 – 190.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 186

them the opportunity to rehearse more complex music such as Masses by Haydn and Mozart. A short passage by Collet, who was a member of the choir in the 1830s when it was at 'the height of its fame', gives an interesting insight into the perception of music at South Place at the time.<sup>122</sup>

Once or twice we sang some anthem in the service. In the evening this was not much objected to, but in the morning it was different, Music sung to words not known to the congregation and not in the hymn book could not be recognised as part of the service. It was felt to be an impertinence. During these six years I do not recollect that Miss Flower gave us any further compositions, except "Mark the soft falling snow" and, I believe, Bowring's "Ancient of Ages" (*South Place Magazine*).<sup>123</sup>

However, Eliza Flower clearly was not too disheartened and continued to persevere with her mission to integrate more music into South Place life. When *Hymns and Anthems* was published in 1841 it was subsequently used by the congregation and the choir, up to the twentieth century.<sup>124</sup> In line with her aim to get the congregation to engage with the musical elements of the service, Eliza Flower wrote anthems that required a response from the congregation alongside a second choir, similar to the system of cathedral choirs. Collet noted that this was extremely effective, particularly as Eliza Flower was careful to place them alongside old favourites, which were 'sung with great zest'.<sup>125</sup> His sister, Sophia D. Collet, was also a Unitarian and member of the South Place Chapel, who transcribed many of Fox's sermons for publication. It is significant that she published feminist articles in radical reforming journals and signed petitions for women's suffrage.<sup>126</sup> Sophia Collet's niece, Clara Elizabeth Collet, also made a significant contribution to Conway Hall's feminist history, when she gave a lecture on 2 February 1890 titled 'The Economic Position of Educated Working Women'.<sup>127</sup> Influenced by her aunt, Clara Collet became a women's rights campaigner

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<sup>122</sup> C., E. A. "Dr. Conway's Reminiscences of South Place" *South Place Magazine* (ed. Reynolds) 10, no. 5 (February 1905): 66.

<sup>123</sup> Collet, "The Musical at South Place Under Mr Fox's Ministry, from 1841 – 1852", 187.

<sup>124</sup> Fox, *Hymns and Anthems*.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 188.

<sup>126</sup> Gleadle, Kathryn. "Collet, Sophia Dobson" in *Dictionary of National Biography*, September 2004.

<sup>127</sup> Report of the committee of South Place Ethical Society: 1889 – 90, 10.

and civil servant, who among many achievements wrote about women's work in the East End of London and education for girls.<sup>128</sup> The Collet family's influence on the South Place community is a good example of the strong family ties that existed for a long time within the Society, as are the Flower sisters, and as will be later demonstrated, the Grimsons.

Alongside the hymn writing, both sisters also wrote popular protest songs about political issues of the time, influenced by their radical Christian and political views. Eliza Flower's songs about the 1832 Reform Bill include: 'The Gallant Grey', 'The Gathering of the Unions' and 'The Barons Bold on Runnymede'. She followed these with *Four Free Trade Songs* about the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846, the words for which were written by her sister. Hyde describes the collections as 'singable, but not subtle', which is also applicable to many of her hymns.<sup>129</sup> Janet Wootton also talks about the Flower sisters' output of hymns and songs, particularly focusing on the recurring subject of death and sentimentalism in Sarah Flower's early writing. She also comments on Sarah Flower's contribution of articles that appeared in the *Monthly Repository* between 1833 and 1836. One of the key themes as her writing developed was her ambition for full equality between men and women.<sup>130</sup> Wootton quotes a passage of Sarah Flower after seeing works of art by women in Luxemburg, which is worth repeating here: 'And what becomes of woman's intellect and woman's soul, and the courage that prompts her to dare all that may become a woman...? We would do away with *mere dependence* which is only gratifying to a man as it ministers to his love of power'.<sup>131</sup> Like her friend Martineau, Sarah Flower felt that women had the intellectual capacity to equal men, and blamed the lower standards of expectation and education for the divide in notable achievements in their era. Such ideas and actions place Sarah Flower in particular at the centre of South Place's early connections with feminism and music. Eliza and Sarah's engagement with both music and socio-political issues led to forms of expression that shaped the cultural values of the Society.

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<sup>128</sup> Doughan, David. "Collet, Clara Elizabeth" in *Dictionary of National Biography*, September 2004.

<sup>129</sup> Hyde, *New Found Voices*, 63 – 64.

<sup>130</sup> Wootton, *This is Our Song: Women's Hymn-Writing*, 122 – 124.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 122; and *Monthly Repository*, 1834, 61 (her emphasis).

### 3.4 South Place led by the Conways (1864 – 1884, 1892 – 1897)

Fox's time at South Place ended in 1853, and Henry Jerson and H. Barnett briefly led the chapel between 1853 and 1863. It was the American Moncure Daniel Conway (1832 – 1907), who took over in 1864, and had the next greatest influence on the Society, so much so that the Society is now named after him. During his time as leader, he took the congregation, already an independent, rationally minded society, further away from Theism towards Humanism. As well as his leadership at Conway Hall, he is most recognised for his biography of Thomas Paine, written between 1885 and 1892 when he returned to America during a break from his position at Conway Hall. He was also a prominent figure in anti-slavery campaigns, famously helping his own father's slaves to escape at the start of the American Civil War. Many of his views correlate with well-known figures in his social circle, such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Walt Whitman, Mark Twain, George Eliot and Darwin.<sup>132</sup>

Moncure Conway is also remembered as an active feminist, and it is worth noting that his change in attitude away from his initial scepticism about women's suffrage was greatly influenced by his wife, Ellen Dana Conway (1833 – 1897), and Millicent Fawcett (1847 – 1929).<sup>133</sup> In 1999, Virginia Clark reminded us that the first meeting in the UK in support of women's suffrage took place at Stamford Street Unitarian Chapel in April 1868, and among five of the well-known speakers, three were Unitarians and one was Conway.<sup>134</sup> The focus of his speech was women in the United States, especially around co-education and the prominent role of women as teachers. The event was reported widely in the national press, and as Alan Ruston noted after Clark's discovery, this places Unitarians at the forefront of women's rights and social reform in the nineteenth century.<sup>135</sup> Later, Conway continued his support by speaking at the first public meeting in support of women's equality in 1871 at Hackney Town Hall.<sup>136</sup> Ellen Conway was also an active campaigner of women's rights and wrote for the *South*

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<sup>132</sup> D'Entremont, John. "Conway, Moncure Daniel" in *Dictionary of National Biography*, September 2004. It is worth noting that Tennyson and Charles Dickens were also associates, but did not share Conways views about race and slavery.

<sup>133</sup> Herrick, *Aspiring to the Truth*, 123. Millicent Fawcett also spoke at the chapel and her husband was Henry Fawcett, another strong campaigner for women's rights.

<sup>134</sup> Clark, Virginia, "Stamford Street Unitarian Chapel 6 April 1868: A Unitarian First for Women's Suffrage," *Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society* 22, no.2 (April 2000): 144 – 49.

<sup>135</sup> Ruston, Alan. "Votes for Women – A Real Scoop!" *Inquirer*, (19 June 1999): 147–56.

<sup>136</sup> Herrick, *Aspiring to the Truth*, 124.

*Place Magazine* about topics such as the ethics of domestic service.<sup>137</sup> Through a combined effort, the Conways brought more women in to speak at the Chapel, including eminent American abolitionist, Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815 – 1902), who was a leading figure in the US suffrage campaign and fought for universal suffrage as well as women's equality. In 1883, she addressed the South Place congregation, boldly asking, 'What has Christianity done for women?'.<sup>138</sup> She subsequently expressed: 'I never more enjoyed speaking than on this occasion, for I had been so oppressed with the degradation of women under canon law and church discipline, that I had a sense of relief'.<sup>139</sup> Alice Drysdale Vickery (1844 – 1929) was a member of the congregation, who as a doctor and advocate of women's rights was much admired, as was the suffragist Emily Evans Bell.<sup>140</sup> During Conway's leadership, Caroline Fletcher-Smith also joined the Society and took on the role of secretary to the general committee from 1882 until 1928 when she was disabled by an accident, unfortunately just before she was able to qualify as a doctor from the Ladies' Medical College in Fitzroy Square.<sup>141</sup> Millicent Fawcett, Julia Ward Howe (1819 – 1910) and Ernestine Rose (1810 – 1892) were among the rest of the women who made powerful speeches about women's rights at South Place during this time.

Another woman who had a significant role at South Place and globally during Conway's era was Annie Besant (1847 – 1933). Perhaps best known for her controversial collaborations with Charles Bradlaugh in support of birth control, and her leadership within the infamous 1888 London match girls' strike, Besant fought for women's rights throughout her eventful career primarily as a writer and political and social reformer.<sup>142</sup> In 1875, at an early stage in her career as an orator, the Conways gave her the opportunity to give her first lecture at South Place. She became a regular feature at the platform, giving a series of lectures on theosophy in the 1880s, as well as

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<sup>137</sup> Conway, Ellen Dana. "The Ethics of Domestic Service". *South Place Magazine* 4, no.1 (October 1898): 7 – 11.

<sup>138</sup> Herrick, *Aspiring to the Truth*, 124.

<sup>139</sup> Stanton, Elizabeth Cady, *Eighty years and more: Reminiscences 1815 – 1897* (New York: T. Fisher Unwin, 1898), 351 – 377.

<sup>140</sup> How-Martyn, Edith. "Obituary: Alice Drysdale Vickery." *South Place Magazine* 34, no.5 (May 1929): 5 – 6; CHES archive: SPES/5/3/2/1 (Correspondence between Moncure Conway and Emily Evans Bell).

<sup>141</sup> MacKillop, *The British Ethical Societies*, 56.

<sup>142</sup> Taylor, Anne. "Besant [née Wood], Annie" in *Dictionary of National Biography*, September 2004.

lectures entitled 'The evolution of morality' and 'The basis of socialism'<sup>143</sup>. In 1886, she also took part in a debate against Corrie Grant, fighting the statement 'that the existence of classes who live upon unearned incomes is detrimental to the welfare of the community, and ought to be put an end to by legislation'.<sup>144</sup> She continued to be a prominent member of the Society into the twentieth century, and between 1887 and 1927 gave lectures on a diverse range of topics (see Table 2).<sup>145</sup> Besant was close to both Ellen and Moncure Conway. When Annie Besant struggled to gain custody of her children, who had been taken from her because of her atheism, the Conways helped with her case. Also when Besant was refused admission to study for her Bachelor of Science degree at London University, they took action to organise a petition demanding the right of women to attend classes.<sup>146</sup>

### 3.5 From Religion to Ethics

Conway returned to leadership at South Place in 1893, but left again in 1897 when his wife became seriously ill. His influence on religious and social thought at the Society and in the city was substantial. One of his final significant acts at the Society was his suggestion that Stanton Coit (1888 – 91) should take over the position as minister. It was the relatively short-term leadership of Coit that brought about one of the biggest changes to the chapel, which was a complete break away from religion to become an ethical society in 1888. Coit was an American who arrived in London with the aim of introducing ethical societies to the UK. The movement had begun in 1877 when the New York Society for Ethical Culture was founded, and over the following decade, similar societies sprung up across America. The first ethical society in the UK was founded in 1886 and between that year and 1927, seventy-four Ethical Societies were founded in the UK.<sup>147</sup> Although Conway wrote that he saw the 'Ethical Movement as substantially one with the South Place idea', the decision caused confusion and dispute between some members of the congregation.<sup>148</sup> Some members left, however, the

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<sup>143</sup> 6 December 1885 (Report of the committee of SPES: 1885), 14; 27 November 1887 (Report of the committee of SPES: 1887), 13.

<sup>144</sup> 6 March 1887 (Report of the committee of SPES: 1887), 13.

<sup>145</sup> In 2017, a play was performed at Conway Hall about Annie Besant's involvement at South Place and in India.

<sup>146</sup> Herrick, *Aspiring to the Truth*, 123.

<sup>147</sup> Spiller provides a list of British ethical societies with details of the years they were founded and dissolved in: Spiller, *The Ethical Movement in Great Britain*, 114 – 115.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, 26. Quotation from: Report of the committee of SPES: 1886 – 87.



activities and discussions carried on in a similar nature, particularly during Conway's return from 1892 – 1897. Whilst the conflict highlighted the range of beliefs and attitudes that were attracted to the Society, eventually South Place continued to flourish throughout the next twenty years. After Coit left South Place because of differences with the congregation over the changes he made as minister, South Place continued to have a significant place in the ethical community, despite tensions with Coit, who continued to work for the movement throughout the UK.<sup>149</sup>

One of the most detailed representations of the ethical movement's stance on women's equality comes in the form of a manifesto about suffrage published after a meeting by members of the Ethical Church (also known as the West London Ethical Society) in Bayswater on Monday 3 February 1913 (Image 7).<sup>150</sup> Written at a time when the suffragettes had in the last year become more violent and extreme in their methods, the four-page document addressed to the 'Suffragists of England' urges a return to the more peaceful militancy of the Suffragists. In doing this, they referenced their actions after the 1906 General Election and exemplary women such as Josephine Butler. The Ethical Church was against destructive behaviour in aid of the Suffrage Movement, believing that it would 'fascinate and tempt the mentally unbalanced' and alienate the public who were not yet hostile but only indifferent to 'Votes for Women'.<sup>151</sup> Following statements on their position in the matter, the manifesto goes on to list five suggestions of 'spiritual militancy' that could be performed by the Suffragists in order to challenge public attention, enlighten the blind and gain extra support. As well as marches outside Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's Cathedral, the Ethical Church also recommended that large groups of women attend theatres, concerts and operas dressed in mourning clothes with orange scarves reflecting the dress of the ascetics of the East as a symbolic challenge to the public. They also point to the inspirational examples of painters, sculptors and musicians:

These should be retained to electrify the millions, by means of art in our theatres and in our streets, filling the public with shame and horror by

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<sup>149</sup> Mackillop, *The British Ethical Societies*, 48 – 58.

<sup>150</sup> *A Manifesto from the Ethical Church, Bayswater, To the Suffragists of England*: BHA Archive: BHA/3/8/1/

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

bringing home to their imagination and their heart the outrage and injury to humanity involved in the subjection of women.<sup>152</sup>

This statement demonstrates the extent to which members of the ethical movement believed that the arts held the potential to reshape society and influence opinions in an important and direct way, which in this case would be beneficial to the women's movement.

The manifesto also suggests that knowledge enhancement in areas such as history, biology, psychology, law and economics would help women to become better speakers and debaters for their cause than they 'have yet shown themselves to be'. The point then goes on to advise that women work 'for eight or ten hours a day to become irresistible logicians and presenters of facts and principles'.<sup>153</sup> It is bemusing how a piece of writing essentially championing women's rights can simultaneously sound so condescending; however, ultimately the Ethical Church gave support for women's suffrage and the community was not afraid to make their opinions heard. The slightly patronising comments about knowledge are also reflective of the ethical societies' general mind-set that education and learning are the best way for a person to improve themselves, so it is a sentiment that would have been directed at all members of society, not just women. Nevertheless, calls for women to use methods 'which combine the wisdom of the serpent with the harmlessness of the dove' highlight the passive language that was still used to represent women. Furthermore, the tone in which the manifesto tells women how to run their campaign leaves one to wonder how many women were actually involved in writing this manifesto. This is even more problematic knowing that the secretary of the Society (G. E. O'Dell) wrote to the suffragist Pippa Strachey (1872 – 1968) to ask if she would speak at one of their events, warning her: 'Our members are by no means all suffragists!'.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>154</sup> LSE Women's Library: 9/01/0382-384: Letter from G. E. O'Dell to P. Strachey, January 1908.

# **A Manifesto from the Ethical Church, BAYSWATER, To the Suffragists of England.**

(Passed at a Meeting of the Members of the Church, Monday,  
February 3rd, 1913).

We, the Members of the West London Ethical Society, call upon all the Suffragists of England to redouble their sacrifice, energy and ingenuity, in attempts to force the Government to introduce a Bill to Enfranchise Women.

We applaud that form of militancy which, during the first few months after the General Election of 1906, was exclusively practised. It in nowise aimed at the destruction of property, nor in any way involved a menace to life—except to that of the Suffragists themselves. Although defiant of police regulations, it was purely spiritual: that is to say, it aimed only to beat down and break through those unjust prejudices and selfish ideas which had denied political equality to women. Such militant tactics accorded with the tradition of the finest and bravest English reformers. Josephine Butler, by whose militancy most cruel and insulting laws against women were repealed, said to those who heaped ignominy upon her: "What have I to do with peace any more? It is now war to the knife. Principles know not the name of mercy. In the broad light of day, and under a thousand eyes, we now take up our position: we make no compromise, and we are ready to meet all the powers of earth and hell combined." Yet Josephine Butler destroyed no one's property, and threatened no one's life, but by her spiritual audacity and aggressive protest she terrorised the guilty, strengthened the cowardly, and opened the eyes of the blind. In similar manner, the founder of the Quakers, George Fox, rebuked preachers in church, thereby violating the law; and at one time two thousand Quakers were in prison. But they made no man fear for his possessions or his life.

We regret that militancy in the Suffrage Movement in recent months, instead of inventing new means of challenging public opinion by brave and dramatic appeals to the conscience of the community, has taken to smashing windows, destroying letters, and threatening worse calamities of a material sort. Such a policy will soon get beyond the control of responsible leaders. It will fascinate and tempt the mentally unbalanced. It will arouse disgust and resentment in the minds of the unimaginative public. It will inevitably prove to be a blind alley, leading nowhere, if pursued to its end, except to the suppression of its instigators and the utter alienation of the vast numbers of the public who are still not hostile but only indifferent to "Votes for Women."

<sup>155</sup> *A Manifesto from the Ethical Church, Bayswater, To the Suffragists of England*: BHA Archive: BHA/3/8/1/

However, it is actually quite likely that at least some women were involved, as the ethical movement attracted more women to its societies and committees than other free thought organisations in the UK, which according to Edward Royle were dominated by men.<sup>156</sup> The Ethical Church itself had several female members on the committee who may have contributed to the manifesto.<sup>157</sup> A few years previously, in 1908, O'Dell had informed Strachey that the Ethical Church had about three hundred women members, who were mostly educated and middle-class.<sup>158</sup> It is fair to assume that a similar demographic was attracted to other London ethical societies, including South Place. Moreover, another socially active group established within London was the 'Women's Group of the Ethical Movement'. This group had monthly meetings that often involved a visiting speaker about a range of topics. Examples of their publications include a written manifesto about World War One, published in IWSA's monthly journal in 1915.<sup>159</sup> Articles frequently appeared in *The Ethical World*, debating the topic of women's suffrage and equality. One titled 'The Spiritual Militancy League' talks about the recently formed Spiritual Militancy League for the Women's Charter of Rights and Liberties, established by the West London Ethical Society, with Stanton Coit's wife, Fanny, as chairman.<sup>160</sup> The women were identified by their orange-coloured scarves, which presumably matched the orange and black banner that was designed for their marches (Image 8). Their actions included writing manifestos and sending letters to the clergy appealing to them to assist their agenda. Sentiments of the Spiritual Militancy League and the Ethical Church's manifesto can also be seen in this didactic poem (Image 9) that was printed in *The Ethical World* in 1912.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Royle, *Radicals, Secularists and Republicans*, 250.

<sup>157</sup> Minutes of the West London Ethical Society and Ethical Church (1892 – 1932): BHA Archive: BHA/3/8/1/

<sup>158</sup> LSE Women's Library: 9/01/0382-384: Letter from G. E. O'Dell to P. Strachey, January 1908.

<sup>159</sup> Minutes of the Women's Group of the Ethical Movement, (1920 – 1926): BHA Archive: BHA/3/9/1/

<sup>160</sup> *The Ethical World*, May 15 1913, 74.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, March 1912.

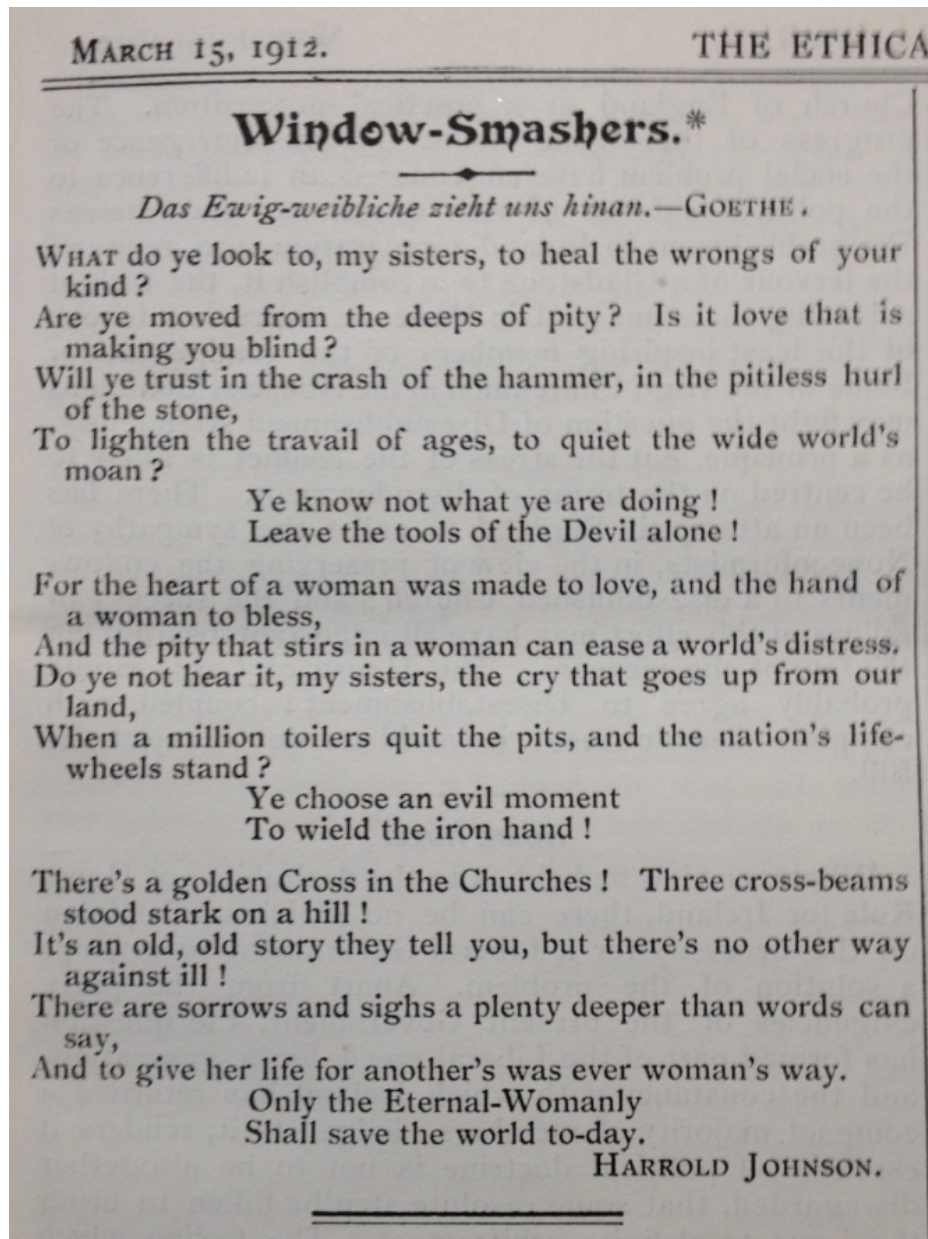


Image 8 - Banner of the Spiritual Militancy League.<sup>162</sup>



<sup>162</sup> LSE Women's Library: 2ASL/11/62: Design for spiritual militancy banner made by Mary Lowndes (1856 – 1929), c.1910.

Image 9 - Window Smashers by Harrold Johnson.<sup>163</sup>



Another article titled 'Woman Suffrage' was contributed by F. J. Gould.<sup>164</sup> It initiated a sequence of correspondence printed in the magazine about the topics of suffrage and class, beginning with a letter from Harriet McIlquham, who wrote with passion: "The Ethical World need not ask women to reflect. They have been reflecting for years past during inactive masculine contempt of their opinions".<sup>165</sup> Her response (and several others) prove that not all women or men of the ethical societies were satisfied by the movement's official stance, and there were many conflicting opinions between

<sup>163</sup> Johnson, Harold, *The Ethical World*, 15 March 1912.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., 15 February 1907, 10.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid., 15 March 1907, 23 - 4.

members. On the other hand, a letter addressed to 'My dear Margaret' from Muriel (no surnames are given) was printed in *The Ethical World* in 1912, which self-reflectively traces how Muriel's feminism steered her away from Christianity and brought her to the ethical movement. Towards the end of the letter Muriel wrote:

But to come back to your idea that the "advanced" women are forgetting to be womanly. If that is what you think about those who are asking for votes and joining trade unions, I wonder what you will think about the women [...] who have actually left the Church and given up its doctrines! What awful vision of frozen-souled bluestockings will the thought conjure up in your mind?<sup>166</sup>

The protestations from Muriel that follow that many women at the ethical societies are still 'womanly' because they cook, do needlework and have fine taste in dress, are far from the feminism we experience today. However, her letter is a reminder of how radical it was seen for a woman to be a member of the ethical movement, even in 1912.

Another crucial document linking the ethical movement to feminism is a pamphlet written by Zona Vallance (1860 – 1904), *The Ethical Movement and Women*, published in 1905. It was written to present her readers with a summary of the history of this topic and the debates surrounding it, in order to quicken thought and encourage new discussions on the matter.<sup>167</sup> Vallance became a member of the ethical movement in 1889. She confirms that a large proportion of members of the Ethical Society were women and writes: 'in some [societies] they preponderate numerically'.<sup>168</sup> The use of the word 'numerically' here is telling. Even though they may have dominated in quantity, the power was still clearly felt to be in the hands of men. This is despite the fact that Vallance also confirms that women were responsible for a large share of the organisation and propaganda. Throughout the essay she discusses how ancient

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<sup>166</sup> Ibid., February 15 1912, 29.

<sup>167</sup> Vallance, Zona. "The Ethical Movement and Women, published for the Union of Ethical Societies." London: *The Ethical World Publishing Company, Ltd.*, 1905. Pamphlet on microform: <https://archive.org/details/ethicalmovementw00vall/page/n3> [accessed October 2018]

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., 1.

theological systems have affected the status of women and the discoveries of 'modern science' that counteract arguments that women are a weaker sex. She then questions the theories of Auguste Comte (1798 - 1857) and other men who have asserted that women must have moral discipline and limit themselves to family life, whilst using the skills of persuasion and influence, rather than directness, towards men. A departure from religion is of central importance to Vallance in answering these questions, since she believed that morality was no longer bound purely to the supernatural and that there is no fore-ordained relationship between women and men. The main concerns of the essay are that women are vulnerable to abuse and poverty without financial security of their own, and women should be able to pursue their talents in the service of the common good, through work that would also enable them to support themselves and their families. For this, Vallance argues, the vote is necessary to enable women to have some control over their environment. She also contends that fair opportunities for women were key to solving class disparity, another central topic in ethical society debates. The fact that this was published 'for' the Union of the Ethical Societies by The Ethical World Publishing Company shows that the arguments in Vallance's essay had full support from the leading figures of the movement and that there was an active attempt to increase backing from the members. In her will, Vallance split her £3806 14s. between her sister, Ida, and Stanton Coit, presumably as a donation to the ethical societies.<sup>169</sup> 'Woman Sunday' was founded by the West London Ethical Society in her memory and took place annually on the first Sunday of February, in the form of a special service. Many ethical societies and labour churches marked the day in different ways.<sup>170</sup> For example, in 1907 Joseph McCabe gave a lecture to the South London Ethical Society titled 'Is Woman Inferior?', which reportedly garnered an exceptionally large audience.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> "Vallance, Zona." England and Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of wills and administrations). 8 February 1905, 9. £3806 14s. in 1905 is equivalent to approx. £299,090.52 in 2017 according to: The National Archives. "Currency converter: 1270 – 2017". Accessed August 2018. <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency-converter/>

<sup>170</sup> In February 1908 the following societies celebrated 'Woman Sunday': West London Ethical Society, South London Ethical Society, Holloway Ethical Society, Wood Green Ethical Society, Kingston Humanitarian Society, Brighton Ethical Society, Nelson Ethical Society, Manchester Ethical Society, Hammersmith Ethical Society, Paignton Ethical Society, Levenshulme Labour Church, Farnworth Labour Church, Wakefield Branch I. L. P., Nottingham Labour Church, New Salford Branch I. L. P. *The Ethical World*, 15 February 1908.

<sup>171</sup> *The Ethical World*, 15 February 1907.



### 3.6 Women, Feminism and Suffrage at South Place (1887 – 1927)

Apart from its association with the activities of the ethical movement as a whole, South Place was also promoting feminism and women's rights within its own walls. Along with many others, the women of South Place marched through London under the banner of 'Ethical Societies' in the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies procession on Saturday 13 June 1908, anticipated to be one of the most important political events in recent years (see Image 10).<sup>172</sup> Influenced partially by Stanton Coit, the Girls' Club was set up at South Place in 1889, open four days of the week. There were also classes in dancing, dressmaking, music and part-singing, specifically for women. There was also a Women's Committee formed with the aim of practical philanthropy, a common venture for middle-class Victorian and Edwardian women. In November 1889, a meeting was held in support of Trade Unions for Women, which was held at the Chapel.<sup>173</sup> As in Fox and Conway's time, the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries continued to see many women giving lectures and taking part in discussions at South Place about the women's movement. Crucially, women were also given the opportunity to lecture on other subjects, showing that the organisers of South Place recognised the women's ability to present knowledge on a range of topics, which could have been tackled by men from an equal perspective. For example, in the early 1900s Hypatia Bradlaugh Bonner (1858 – 1935) spoke on diverse topics such as 'Vengeance', 'The New India' and 'The English Sunday'.<sup>174</sup> As a freethinker and suffragist, she advocated women's suffrage, but opposed the violence of the suffragettes, much like other members of the Ethical movement.<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> SPES/1/1/4: Minutes of the South Place Ethical Society, June 1908.

<sup>173</sup> Reports of the committee of South Place Ethical Society: 1887 - 1927.

<sup>174</sup> 8 October 1905 (Report of the committee of SPES: 1905 - 6); 10 June 1906 Report of the committee of SPES: 1906 – 7); 30 December 1906 (Report of the committee of SPES: 1906 – 7).

<sup>175</sup> Royle, Edward. "Bonner, Hypatia Bradlaugh" in *Dictionary of National Biography*, September 2006.

**National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies,**  
**25, Victoria Street, Westminster, S.W.**

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**PROCESSION,**  
**SATURDAY, JUNE 13th, 1908.**

**ROUTE:—Up Northumberland Avenue, via Cockspur Street,  
Lower Regent Street, and Piccadilly.**

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**Instructions for those Joining in the Procession.**

**Punctuality is of the utmost importance.**

Please join the Block in which you wish to walk not later than  
**2.30 p.m.** Your place in the Block will be indicated by your  
Special Banner.

Form up 6 abreast (except in Blocks 2 and 3, which will march 4  
abreast), with each line about a yard apart.

**The Blocks will be arranged as follows (see Plan other side):—**

**BLOCK 1.** (6 abreast) **Provincial N.U.W.S Societies,**  
alphabetically arranged, headed by the **PRESIDENT, Mrs.**  
**HENRY FAWCETT, LL.D.**

**BLOCK 2.** (4 abreast) **Colonials and Internationals.**  
**Professions:** Medical Women, University Women,  
and Education.

**BLOCK 3.** (4 abreast) **Professions continued:** Business  
Women, Office Women.

**BLOCK 4.** (6 abreast) **Professions continued:** Writers,  
Artists, Actors, Musicians, Nurses, Physical Training,  
Gardeners, Farmers, Homemakers, &c.

**BLOCK 5.** (6 abreast) **Societies:** Women's Co-operative Guild,  
Southwark Working Women, Employment Reform League,  
National Union of Women Workers, Ethical Societies, &c.

**BLOCK 6.** (6 abreast) **Political Societies:** Liberals, Fabians,  
Conservatives and Unionists.

**BLOCK 7.** (6 abreast) **Women's Freedom League.**

**BLOCK 8.** (6 abreast) **London Society for Women's  
Suffrage,** arranged alphabetically in Constituencies.

**Everyone is urged to take their Tickets for the Albert Hall  
beforehand, as there may not be any left for Sale at the doors.**

—

Holders of Brake Tickets will find the Brakes on the Embankment to  
the East of Northumberland Avenue.

Behind the Brakes will be the Carriages; and, last of all, the Motor  
Cars near the Temple.

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Printed by **VACHER & SON,** Westminster House, S.W.—16298.

<sup>176</sup> Women and her sphere. "Suffrage Stories: An Army Of Banners – Designed For The NUWSS Suffrage Procession 13 June". Accessed September 2018.

<https://womanandhersphere.com/2014/11/26/suffrage-stories-an-army-of-banners-designed-for-the-nuwss-suffrage-procession-13-june-1908/>

The number of women who spoke at South Place was still small in comparison to the number of men. ‘...Nevertheless, given the larger overall proportion of women at South Place, opportunities to speak were seemingly greater than at other freethought societies in Britain.’<sup>177</sup> Many had backgrounds in women’s rights and other political issues of the day that would be worth discussing at length.’ For the purposes of this thesis, however, it is necessary to give a shorter overview of some of the most prominent women who came to be linked with South Place Ethical Society. The SPES annual reports provide a more complete list, and some reports of the lectures can be found in the relevant issues of the *Ethical Record*. Table 2 shows some of the women who spoke at South Place between 1887 and 1927 and the topics of their discussions.

Table 2 - Speakers at South Place between 1887 and 1927.<sup>178</sup>

Speaker	Date	Title of lecture
Annie Besant (1847 – 1933)	27/11/1887	The Basis of Socialism
	29/01/1888	Am I my Brother’s Keeper?
	29/07/1888	The Basis of Moral Obligation
	01/07/1900	Ancient and Modern Science
	12/10/1900	India and England
	09/10/1904	The Principle of Freethought
Dr. Sophie Bryant (1850 – 1922)	18/12/1887	Early Ireland
Sarah Amos (1840 – 1908)	03/03/1889	Methodism
Clara Elizabeth Collet (1860 – 1948)	02/02/1890	The Economic Position of Educated Working Women
Frances Henrietta Muller (1845 – 1906)	25/10/1891	The Position of Women Throughout the World
Laura Ormiston Chant (1848 – 1923)	10/01/1892	Poverty and the Poor Law
	24/01/1892	Prison Reform
Emilie Ashurst Holyoake (1861 – 1953)	07/11/1894	The Organisation of Labour among Women
Honor Morten (1861 – 1913)	18/11/1895	Nursing
	16/06/1895	Life in a London Hospital
Helen Bosanquet (1860 – 1925)	02/02/1896	My Duty to my Neighbour
Frances Amelia Hicks (1839 – 1917)	17/03/1895	Factory and Workshop Inspection
Rosa Frances Emily Swiney (1847 – 1922)	02/04/1905	Women among the Nations
Hypatia Bradlaugh Bonner (1858 – 1935)	08/10/1905	Vengeance
	10/06/1906	The New India
	30/12/1906	The English Sunday.

<sup>177</sup> Royle, *Radicals, Secularists and Republicans*, 250.

<sup>178</sup> All lectures are listed in the Reports of the committee of South Place Ethical Society 1887 – 1927.

	21/12/1906	I Was a Stranger and Ye Took Me Not In
Ethel Snowden (1881 – 1951)	31/01/1909	The Strike of a Sex
Marion Holmes (1867 – 1943)	26/12/1909	The Torch of Feminism
Teresa Mary Billington-Grieg (1876 – 1964)	03/03/1912	Super-politics
Margaret Wynne Nevinson (1858 – 1932)	31/03/1912	Our Medieval Poor Law
Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1860 – 1935)	01/06/1913	The Need for Beauty
Marion Phillips (1881 – 1932)	16/12/1917 09/01/1920	The Future of Women What is the Woman's Point of View?
Cicily Isabel Andrews (1892 – 1983)	07/04/1918	The Idea of Poverty
Edith How Martyn (1875 – 1954)	16/11/1924	Everybody's Children

Many of the women in this list made incredible achievements throughout their lifetime. Specifically in relation to the suffrage campaign, Bryant was president of the Hampstead National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies;<sup>179</sup> Muller was a theosophist and women's rights activist who founded the *Women's Penny Paper*, the only paper in the world at that time to be managed, printed and published entirely by women.<sup>180</sup> Chant was a founding member of the National Society for the Promotion of Women's Suffrage;<sup>181</sup> Holyoake, another person with family connections to South Place, was a member of the International Women's Franchise Club.<sup>182</sup> Hicks and Holmes were both suffrage campaigners.<sup>183</sup> Swiney was president of the Cheltenham Women's Suffrage Society and a member of WSPU and Women's Freedom League (WFL).<sup>184</sup> Snowden was an executive member of the NUWSS and promoted women's suffrage and the labour movement.<sup>185</sup> Billington-Grieg was an early member of WSPU and friend of the Pankhursts, who later co-founded the WFL alongside Nevinson and Martyn in 1907.<sup>186</sup> Nevinson was also a member of the Church League for Women's Suffrage and the

<sup>179</sup> Anon. "Bryant (née Willock), Sophie" in *Dictionary of National Biography*, September 2004.

<sup>180</sup> Auchmuty, Rosemary. "Muller, (Frances) Henrietta" in *Dictionary of National Biography*, September 2004.

<sup>181</sup> Levine, Philippa. "Chant (née Dibbin), Laura Ormiston" in *Dictionary of National Biography*, September 2004.

<sup>182</sup> Schwartz, *Infidel Feminism*, 72.

<sup>183</sup> Crawford, Elizabeth, *The Women's Suffrage Movement: A Reference Guide, 1866 – 1928* (London: Routledge, 1999), 284 (Hicks) and 290 (Holmes).

<sup>184</sup> Doughan, David. "Swiney (née Biggs), (Rosa) Frances Emily" in *Dictionary of National Biography*, September 2004.

<sup>185</sup> Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement*, 642.

<sup>186</sup> Thom, D. "Grieg, Teresa Mary Billington" in *Dictionary of National Biography*, September 2004.

Women Writers' Suffrage League.<sup>187</sup> Martyn became a leading strategist in the women's suffrage campaign, one of the first women parliamentary candidates and elected as the first woman councillor in Middlesex in 1919.<sup>188</sup> Best known for writing *The Yellow Wallpaper*, Gilman was also a notable American Suffragist. Andrews was also a well-known writer and suffragette, who was best known for her publications under the pseudonym of Rebecca West, such as *The Return of the Soldier* (1918) and *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* (1941).<sup>189</sup> Phillips was a member of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies and became a Labour MP for Sunderland.<sup>190</sup> She saw militancy as a distraction from discussions, so, in line with the peaceful approach of the ethical movement, was a non-militant suffragist. Morten held a similar stance, but protested the disenfranchisement of women by refusing to pay taxes, which led to the confiscation and auctioning of her property.<sup>191</sup>

Notable achievements by the other women in the list include those of Amos, who was a member of the Ladies' National Association for the Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts, founded a home for emancipated women slaves in Cairo and organised a refuge for Armenian women and children in Cyprus.<sup>192</sup> Bosanquet was one of the first two women to gain first-class honours in moral sciences at Cambridge in 1889.<sup>193</sup> With such a strong presence of intelligent, passionate women and feminism at the Society, it is therefore natural to expect that women at South Place were treated with a higher degree of fairness and representation than in many other societies and social arenas in the UK. Throughout the rest of the thesis, a deeper exploration of the place of the social position of the women musicians associated with South Place will begin to answer whether or not this was the case.

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<sup>187</sup> John, Angela, V. "Nevinson (née Jones), Margaret Wynne" in *Dictionary of National Biography*, September 2006.

<sup>188</sup> Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement*, 388.

<sup>189</sup> Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. *The Yellow Wallpaper*. Edited by Dale M. Bauer. Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1998; Scott, Bonnie Kime. "Andrews (née Fairfield), Dame Cicily Isabel (pseud. Rebecca West)" in *Dictionary of National Biography*, May 2011.

<sup>190</sup> Harrison, Brian. "Phillips, Marion" in *Dictionary of National Biography*, September 2010.

<sup>191</sup> Ross, Ellen. "Morten, (Violet) Honnor" in *Dictionary of National Biography*, May 2010.

<sup>192</sup> Hook, Gail Dallas, *Protectorate Cyprus: British Imperial Power Before World War 1* (London: I. B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2015), 248.

<sup>193</sup> Anon. "Bosanquet (née Dandy), Helen" in *Dictionary of National Biography*, September 2004.

### **4.1 Introduction**

Music existed in different forms at each ethical society in Britain and at differing levels of quality, often depending on finances, resources and the musical abilities of its members. However, it was something that united every society. The success of the South Place Sunday Popular Concerts meant that the chapel was an exceptional example of how music operated within the movement. Despite some differences with other societies, that reflected its split from Stanton Coit, South Place's musical accomplishments were one way the Society stayed connected to the wider movement. This chapter will look at how musical activities apart from the concerts, such as the singing of hymns and formation of musical groups, became an important method for all of the ethical societies to present their doctrines and achieve the community-building aims of their movement.

Paula Gillett has acknowledged the 1880s as a decade that saw the formation of many organisations dedicated to bringing music 'to the people'. She refers to it as a recultivation of the rational recreation movement of the 1840s.<sup>194</sup> Music was a central aspect of the movement and it became a truism that music had a valuable social purpose. Dave Russell summarises: 'a scheme of rational recreation that did not include music, was no scheme at all'.<sup>195</sup> He also acknowledges that the earliest attempts to harness music to the service of popular improvement came particularly from Nonconformist backgrounds.<sup>196</sup> The 1880s revival of such activities would therefore have sat well with the radical background of South Place, especially when combined with women musicians who participated in the 'woman's mission' to improve societal values through traditional feminine virtues. It is already understood that during the late-nineteenth century the majority of middle- and upper-class women had engaged in some form of charity work.<sup>197</sup> This chapter will build on Gillett's research to show how women at South Place used music's capacity to educate and entertain simultaneously to further their mission. It is also the first time that the

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<sup>194</sup> Gillett, *Musical Women in England, 1870 – 1914: 'Encroaching on all Man's Privileges'*, 38.

<sup>195</sup> Russell, *Popular Music in England, 1840 – 1914: A social history*, 26.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>197</sup> Gillett, *Musical Women in England, 1870 – 1914: 'Encroaching on all Man's Privileges'*, 35.

topic of music and the ethical movement has been written about in detail, despite the fact that it offers a rich and diverse history of music-making. Woven into this uncovering will be a focus on the role that women had in creating the music and contributing to the debates. Although their voices were often less heard than their male counterparts, their contributions were arguably greater in many ways. It is an important aspect of this study to understand how and why music was so central to the development of the movement, and how women used this as an opportunity to use their skills, as music became inseparable from ethical society life.

#### **4.2 Music for Ethical Devotion**

One major common component of every ethical society was the Sunday service, which had a similar format to a Church service but without the theological focus. At South Place, these services consisted of a main address that tackled a topical moral or political issue, with music intermittently throughout the service. A typical service would follow the structure: hymn, reading, announcements, instrumental music, main address, collection and a final hymn.<sup>198</sup> South Place had a similar structure in the 1880s when it was still officially a religious society, and later other ethical societies followed suit. For example, the West London Ethical Society (which later became known as the Ethical Church) included congregational singing in their services from 1896 and in 1901 a new organ was purchased to play organ voluntaries and accompany the hymns, anthems and the Statement of Belief that were sung by the choir.<sup>199</sup> There were several hymn books that were used by the societies, some of which were compiled for a specific congregation and others that were intended to be distributed more widely. Many of them claimed to be filling a demand for non-theological music to be used by families at home and in schools. The inclusion of music in the services was used as a method of expression for the congregation. The South London Ethical Society described their singing as being equal to the lectures in expressing the ethical purpose of the Society, which highlights the level of importance at which music functioned, beyond entertainment. It also introduces a common argument in their debates that the communal singing of hymns could evoke a powerful experience through musical

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<sup>198</sup> Spiller, *The Ethical Movement in Great Britain*, 79 – 82.

<sup>199</sup> Spiller, *The Ethical Movement in Great Britain*, 79 – 81.

affect that listening to a lecture could not recreate. The fact that everybody who attended the services was expected to participate confirms that the hymn books had an unavoidable influence.

The first book to be compiled especially for South Place was *Hymns and Anthems*, the work of Fox and the Flower sisters. Another edition was published in 1890, and from then on, when the movement was in full swing, many more were produced.<sup>200</sup> Two other popular hymn books, *Ethical Songs with Music* (1892) and *Hymns of Modern Thought* (1912), were largely the work of Josephine Troup.<sup>201</sup> The similarly titled *Ethical Songs* was published in 1898, with a preface by Coit and Spiller.<sup>202</sup> It was published by The Union of Ethical Societies, who also published the *Ethical Hymn Book* in 1905, indicating that they were distributed widely.<sup>203</sup> Others were compiled with a particular occasion in mind. The Forest Gate Ethical Church, later renamed the Emerson Ethical Brotherhood, produced two small hymn books: one called *Ethical Hymns* in 1904, and another renamed *Nature Hymns and Anthems* in 1908.<sup>204</sup> Both contained a selection of songs reprinted from the *Ethical Hymn Book*, the latter with a focus on nature. The purpose of these small collections was for them to be an appropriate size to be carried on a picnic ramble through Epping Forest, where members of the Society would hold a woodland service. Members from other ethical societies were also invited along for this activity on a summer Sunday. The books were not for sale and kept purely for this purpose. The *Ethical Hymn Book* includes two hymns composed by Josephine Troup, and *Nature Hymns and Anthems* contains hymns authored by Fox and Sarah Flower Adams.

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<sup>200</sup> Fox, *Hymns and Anthems*. For further information on the collection see Chapter 2.

<sup>201</sup> Leighton Hall Neighbourhood Guild Committee. *Ethical Songs with Music* (London: Novello, Ewer and Co., 1892). Conway Hall Library: 782.4ETH; Troup, Josephine. *Hymns of Modern Thought: Words and Music. Special Edition with Supplement for the use of the South Place Ethical Society*. (Finsbury: South Place Ethical Society, 1912). Conway Hall Library: 264.2SOU For more information on these collections see Chapter 8.

<sup>202</sup> Coit, Stanton and Spiller, Stanton, *Ethical Songs, compiled and edited for The Union of Ethical Societies*. Reprint. (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., Lim, 1898). Conway Hall Library: 782.4COI

<sup>203</sup> Coit, Stanton, O'Neill, Norman and Spiller, Stanton, *Ethical Hymn Book with Music: Revised and enlarged edition of "Ethical Songs with Music" Issued by The Council of the Union of Ethical Societies* (London: Oppenheimer Bros, 1905). Conway Hall Library: 782.4ETH

<sup>204</sup> Forest Gate Ethical Church. *Nature Hymns and Anthems: Ethical Hymns. A selection, etc.* London: Ward & Ward, 1904.



Most of the aforementioned hymn books were quite similar and contained a traditional style of hymn, the most popular ones featuring in several of the books. However, *Social Worship* (1913) was a little different.<sup>205</sup> Volume 1 is an ethical anthology written by Coit about the practice of social worship. Volume 2, however, is a book of music, compiled and edited by Charles Kennedy Scott, a well-known conductor and composer of the time. Scott was also the enthusiastic organist and musical director of the West London Ethical Society from 1911. Coit and Scott claimed that *Social Worship* was distinctive as it contained the original forms of canticles and responses for use at the ethical societies. For many years the combined volumes formed the basis of the West London Ethical Society's services and many others across the world.<sup>206</sup> A copy remains within the Conway Hall archives, bound in blue velvet with hand stitching on the front. The book contains music by only two female composers: three pieces by Josephine Troup and one by Edith Swepstone. Scott contributed a lengthy introduction to the book, in which he defends the 'new features' of the social worship music. The new features he is referring to include the use of Plain Song for modern words, and the adaption of words in religious music to reflect a purely ethical spirit. His justification of the use of Plain Song is largely based on wanting to avoid forcing masculinity on the music and words by the effects of musical structure. Scott claims that the free rhythm derived from the lack of bar lines in Plain Song allows for feminine phrase endings, which allowed him to match words with more suitable melodies when desired. However, he also explains that the use of Plain Song was not chosen as an exact musical interpretation of the thoughts expressed by the words, but rather as a vehicle for declamation, as the genre allies itself to a range of sentiments.<sup>207</sup> There is a sense of justification throughout Scott's introduction, but his detailed explanations about his musical decisions strongly defend his choices which are enhanced by his observation that 'The Ethical Movement is young, and it takes its rise in a period when... the individual point of view is predominant; so that something of this element is perforce reflected in our work'.<sup>208</sup> Scott's tone suggests that he was

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<sup>205</sup> Coit, Stanton and Scott, Charles Kennedy. *Social Worship for use in families, schools and churches*. Volume II. London: The West London Ethical Society, The Ethical Church, 1913. Conway Hall Library: 291.43COI

<sup>206</sup> Ibid.

<sup>207</sup> Coit, Stanton and Scott, Charles Kennedy. *Social Worship for use in families, schools and churches*, v – vij.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid., xiv.

very conscious of public opinion and saw the compilation and creation of new material as a challenge, and subsequently his hard work indicates a strong dedication towards the movement. Yet, many of the hymns still contain religious references, negating much of what is written in the introduction. The example in Image 11 demonstrates the doubt and questioning that appears in some of the hymns, but is still based on Christianity.

48

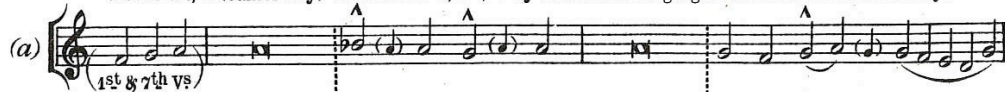
40


## THE MAN ON THE CROSS

(Elizabeth Gibson Cheyne)

1<sup>st</sup> Tone. Sarum ending.

Verses 1 &amp; 7 (Cantor only) and verses 3, 5 &amp; 9 by Cantor and Congregation in unison to this melody:

(a) 

(b) 

## PART I.

(Cantor) 1. When-ev-er there is silence  
around me, by  
day or by night,  
I am start - led by the cry : "Take ..... me down from the cross!"

(Harm.) ..... 2. The first time I  
heard it, I went out and searched: till I found a  
man in the  
throes of cru - ci - fix - ion;

(Unis.) ..... 3. And I said, "I will take you down": And I tried to  
take the nails out of his feet.

(Harm.) ..... 4. But he said, I  
"Let be, for I can-not be ta-ken down : till every man,  
every woman,  
and every child;  
come to-ther to take me down."

(Unis.) ..... 5. And I said, I  
"But I can - not bear your cry : ..... what can I do?"

(Harm.) ..... 6. And he said, I  
"Go about the world, telling ev - 'ry one you meet : There is a  
man up - on the cross!"


## PART II.

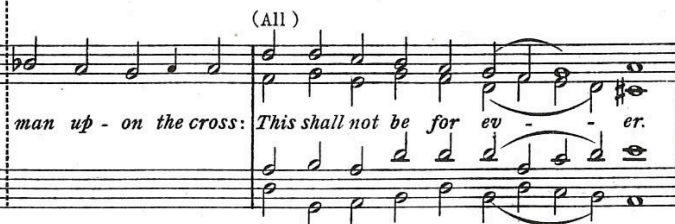
(Cantor) 7. I go a - bout the world,  
telling all the  
rich, and all the  
happy, and all the  
com - fort - a - ble : "There is a man up - on the cross."

(Harm.) ..... 8. But they all say:  
"We are sure you  
are mistaken;  
There was a man  
upon the cross;  
two thou - sand years a - go : but he died, and  
was taken down,  
and was de-cent-ly bur - ied;

(Unis.) ..... 9. And a miracle  
happened, so  
that he rose a -  
gain and ascen-  
ded in - to hea - ven : and is hap - py for ev - er more."

(Harm.) ..... 10. Still I go a - bout the world, say - ing : "There is a man up - on the cross!"

(Cantor) 

(All) 

There is a man up - on the cross: This shall not be for ev - er.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid., 48.

Secular societies in the UK had a similar approach to the ethical societies by incorporating hymns into their services. Several editions, such as *The Secular Song and Hymn Book* and *The Secularists' Manual of Songs and Ceremonies*, are still kept in the Conway Hall library.<sup>210</sup> They contain many of the same hymns, authors and composers that feature in the ethical hymn books, including those with South Place connections such as Emerson, Fox, Conway and Besant. They also follow a similar format. Like in *Hymns of Modern Thought*, with the absence of the Christian liturgy, the hymns are divided into themes such as 'Love', 'Knowledge', 'Virtue', 'Friendship', 'Mysteries of Nature' and 'Songs of the lower classes'.<sup>211</sup> According to the preface of *The Secularists' Manual of Songs and Ceremonies*, the book was compiled 'in answer to the requests of secular Societies throughout the country', many of which already cultivated music in their services, a practice that was encouraged by secular leader Charles Bradlaugh.<sup>212</sup> Many members felt that more music in the services would attract more women and children to secular societies, although it was reported that the inclusion of piano music during lecture events was a welcome relief for many men who attended.<sup>213</sup> This does not mean that the collections did not receive criticism. A collection compiled by Charles Watts and Annie Besant was slated for being utilitarian to the point of parody.<sup>214</sup> Yet this did not prevent both the secular societies and ethical societies in Britain from relying on the traditional religious practice of hymn singing in order to gather momentum for their cause, despite both trying to move away from such doctrines. The hymn collections were seen as necessary by many to add an emotional response to their rationally-driven movement.

Most of the hymn books contain hymns that were authored and/or composed by women. In her account of the musical opportunities that religious spaces have offered women in the past, Jennifer C. Post wrote:

Women restricted to domestic life have found a musical sanctuary for themselves in religious practice... Through their connection with religious

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<sup>210</sup> Besant, Annie. *The Secular Song and Hymn Book*. London: C. Watts, 1867; Holyoake, Austin and Watts, Charles. *The Secularists' Manual of Songs and Ceremonies*. London: Austin & Co., 1871.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

<sup>212</sup> Watts, *The Secularists Manual of Songs and Ceremonies*, iii – v.

<sup>213</sup> Royle, *Radicals, Secularists and Republicans*, 137.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid.

institutions and rituals, women have been permitted to perform in a public setting with greater freedom than they would in their home. In some cases performances in and around religious functions have provided the only opportunities for women to perform music outside the home.<sup>215</sup>

This is partly because churches created a space for women that blurred the lines of public and private life, and due to the value placed on women and morality, they were sometimes given more of a voice than they were elsewhere. Subsequently, it was not thought inappropriate for women to write hymns. Ironically, the same could be said for the ethical societies, particularly South Place, which offered a similar sense of community where women could explore their musical talents, but in a secular environment. At South Place this grew out of the Society's religious origins and the traditions that were sustained throughout its changing theological stance. Yet still, in other societies, the practice of singing hymns continued despite religious connotations, generating an opportunity for women to create and perform music.

The opportunities grew even further through the Ethical Society's wide range of musical activities, which went beyond hymns and towards the professional classical music scene, with many areas in between. As Fuller has shown, the dividing line between amateurism and professionalism in the late-nineteenth century was not clear.<sup>216</sup> Women of the upper and middle classes trying to establish themselves as professional musicians, furthermore, were expected to keep their music-making within the private sphere and not as a way to generate an income. Fuller has explored through the lives of Victorian women musicians how professional status, particularly for composers, was more easily won if the composer also worked in other musical roles, such as performing or educating.<sup>217</sup> In this case, Troup and Swepstone were making significant contributions to the hymn books at South Place for no fee, which could have established them in the category of upper-class women whose

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<sup>215</sup> Post, Jennifer, C., "Erasing the Boundaries between Public and Private in Women's Performance Tradition," in *Cecilia Reclaimed: Feminist Perspectives on Gender and Music*, ed. Cook, Susan C. and Tsou, Judy S. (Illinois: The University of Illinois Press, 1994), 42.

<sup>216</sup> Fuller, Sophie, "Women musicians and professionalism in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries" in *The Music Profession in Britain, 1780 – 1920*, ed. Golding (Routledge: Oxon, 2018), 149 – 165.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid, 150.

musicianship was a hobby rather than a career. However, their participation in South Place's wider musical life would have increased their recognition as professionals. In particular, the concert series was a prestigious platform; whilst Troup and Sweptstone, both women of personal wealth, continued to offer their services for little or no fee, their appearances as both performers (of other musicians' works) and programmed composers at the Sunday concerts would have contributed to their professional status and reputations. This is not to say that professional status was the ultimate goal for both women. Many men and women of a high social status or wealth, or with another established profession, would have been more interested in pursuing music as a hobby. Although Troup contributed a huge amount to the musical life of South Place, she may have been happy with the respect she earned as a musician within that community, and not worried about her status in the profession. However, as is shown in Chapter 8, Sweptstone was more persistent in building a reputation in the more public arena of the concert hall. South Place offered Troup and Sweptstone the opportunity to work in both amateur and professional capacities. The following section will explore this range of opportunities that was available to women musicians at South Place in greater detail.

### **4.3 Music as Rational Recreation**

Each society found a different way of incorporating music into their weekly activities. The Women's Group of the Ethical Movement added singing to the end of their informal meetings after tea.<sup>218</sup> The East London Ethical Society had singing practice on Sundays and their Sunday evening discourses were preceded by hymns.<sup>219</sup> There were musical drills at the children's club and the Society included trips to concerts as part of their excursion activities.<sup>220</sup> At the South London Ethical Society there was a Music Circle for the members. Although it is not entirely clear what they did, the Society hosted a series of musical lectures given by Ashton Jonson, and their own evening concerts.<sup>221</sup> The North London Ethical Society preceded each lecture with thirty

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<sup>218</sup> Minutes of the Women's Group of the Ethical Movement, (1920 – 1926): BHA Archive: BHA/3/9/1/

<sup>219</sup> BL: 08408.ee.66.: Annual Reports of East London Ethical Society, January 1889.

<sup>220</sup> BL: 08408.ee.66.: Annual Reports of East London Ethical Society, January 1900.

<sup>221</sup> BL: W.P.10841.: Annual Reports of South London Ethical Society, 1918 – 9.

minutes of music.<sup>222</sup> The lectures held at the West London Ethical Society were also introduced by music. In the early years of this Society, the lectures were preceded by full concerts, usually consisting of some of the slow movements from popular string quartets. This tradition ceased due to financial reasons, but the speakers were still introduced by an organist, a quartet of singers and a Cantor. Not only was there a lot of musical activity at the Society, it was also of good quality. In 1934 Spiller wrote, 'Emerson... would probably admire, as virtually every visitor does, both the quality of the music and the ability of the performers'.<sup>223</sup> Even the Brighton and Hove Ethical Society, which struggled musically due to small membership and a lack of funds, had a small choir who participated in the services.<sup>224</sup>

Another group that had a lot of engagement with music were members of the Leighton Hall Neighbourhood Guild. Founded in 1892, Leighton Hall was a slightly unusual community in the ethical movement, as it was modelled on the neighbourhood guilds that Stanton Coit had previously successfully set up in America. One of its objects was '... the intellectual and social improvement of its members, and of the people in the neighbourhood...' and among the means listed to do this were a choral society, violin lessons, an orchestra, lectures and concerts.<sup>225</sup> By its fifth year, the guild had 230 members who took part in these activities, as well as many other recreational groups that mirrored life at South Place Ethical Society. Influenced by Coit and the South Place concerts, the guild set up their own Sunday Concert series that began in 1890. Like the South Place concerts, the Leighton Hall concerts included classical chamber music, high-class vocal pieces and instrumental solos. Furthermore, admission was free and there was a collection for the musicians. These concerts became a popular part of the Guild's activities. The committee stated in their annual report: 'The refining influence of the best music is now so very generally acknowledged that the Guild work could hardly be considered complete if it did not include high-class concerts'.<sup>226</sup>

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<sup>222</sup> Spiller, *The Ethical Movement in Great Britain*, 99.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*, 164 – 7.

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*, 41 – 43.

<sup>226</sup> BL: P.P.1102.be.(3.): *The Neighbourhood Guild Review*: London, 1892.

In addition to the concerts, members of the guild joined forces with other locals to form a new orchestra in 1892. There was also a choir that met regularly, and sang at their Sunday services from the *Ethical Songs with Music*, a hymn book that was compiled specially for the Society as the result of a vote.<sup>227</sup> They also hosted dances and other entertainments to which they invited members from the ethical societies, and were pleased that their musical activities could be used for social intercourse with other like-minded people. Unfortunately, the guild did not continue running for as long as Coit might have hoped, as it disintegrated in 1902, although some activities continued to run as part of the St. Pancras Ethical Society.<sup>228</sup> Gilchrist and Jeffs observe that judging from the Leighton Hall journal, *The Moscheles Review*, the members were ‘cheery young things more interested in the tennis clubs, fancy dress balls and other fatuous debates, than in social regeneration’, which may explain the guild’s early demise.<sup>229</sup> In contrast, The Neighbourhood Guild that Coit set up in New York in 1886 still exists today as the University Settlement Society of New York.<sup>230</sup>

In Coit’s 1891 book about the formation of Neighbourhood Guilds, he reveals a lot about his attitude towards music as a form of entertainment and the status of different genres. He voiced concern that entertainment was often seen as superficial and not serious enough to be classed alongside ‘solemn’ lectures and discussions on socialism, politics and morals. Coit felt that entertainment, including music, could have an even deeper effect if engaged with in the right way. Of the Leighton Hall Guild’s activities, he wrote:

The success of the Guild entertainments in competing with music halls is seen in the case of a certain group of young men in the Leighton Hall Guild, who, until they joined it, had been accustomed to attend music halls every Saturday evening; but now, to their own surprise, they have not, - and laughingly boast that they have not, - been inside a music hall for eighteen

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<sup>227</sup> Leighton Hall Neighbourhood Guild Committee. *Ethical Songs with Music*. London: Novello, Ewer and Co., 1892. Conway Hall Library: 782.4ETH

<sup>228</sup> Spiller, *The Ethical Movement in Great Britain*, 46.

<sup>229</sup> Rose, Michael, ‘The secular faith of the social settlements. “If Christ came to Chicago”’ in *Settlements, Social Change and Community Action: Good Neighbours*, ed. Gilchrist, Ruth and Jeffs, Tony (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2001), 28.

<sup>230</sup> University Settlement Society of New York. “University Settlement”. Accessed August 2018. <https://www.universitysettlement.org/us/>



months. Instead, they have had their own private dance, - where the intervals between waltzes and lancers have been filled with music by Mendelssohn, Beethoven, and Bach, performed by friends of the Guild. The members are conscious of the change of taste that is being brought about in them. As one of them said to me at the close of our eleventh Sunday afternoon free concert. "Well, we shall not be satisfied after this with anything but the very best music and the best performances". The secret of the way to change the artistic appreciation of people is continuity of training in the better class of art... The same principle applies to the improvement of manners.<sup>231</sup>

Coit's writing shows that he believed Classical music to be of a higher status than other genres, particularly against the sort of music that would commonly be heard in a music hall. It was clearly seen as important to deter people away from the music halls as early as possible. In November 1889, when Coit was the leader of South Place, the South Place Junior Ethical Union was presented with a discussion on 'The influence of theatres and music halls'.<sup>232</sup> The same discussion took place at the Holloway Ethical Society after several of the Society's workers filled two boxes at the Holloway Empire Music Hall on a Thursday night in order to establish its influence for good or ill.<sup>233</sup> The parallel drawn between the cultivation of chamber music and manners suggests that Coit saw a direct correlation between music and character, and attached different moral values to different genres of music. These thoughts are echoed in another passage: 'Because entertainment is merry and a diversion, it is looked upon as a superficial thing, and not serious – not worthy, indeed, to be classed with solemn lectures and discussion on socialism, politics and morals. But in reality, the moral effects of mere merriment... are often deeper than those of grim dispute and didactic instruction'.<sup>234</sup> Through placing music on the same level as lectures, Coit was suggesting that music has an equal power of intellectual stimulation. Understanding

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<sup>231</sup> Coit, Stanton, *Neighbourhood Guilds: An Instrument of Social Reform* (London: Swann Sonnenschein, 1891), 112 - 3.

<sup>232</sup> SPES/1/1/3: Annual Reports of the Committee of South Place Ethical Society, 1865 – 1890.

<sup>233</sup> *The Ethical World*, 15 February 1907.

<sup>234</sup> Coit, Stanton, *Neighbourhood Guilds: An Instrument of Social Reform*, 108.

attitudes that permeated the ethical movement towards different genres of music also unearths the sphere in which women musicians of the ethical societies were working.

Another view on this topic was given in a lecture titled 'The Ethical Function of Music' by Ellen Creak (1862 – 1917) to an audience of sixty at the Manchester Ethical Society in 1907, accompanied by vocal and instrumental illustrations.<sup>235</sup> Creak claimed that all actions have their roots in emotion, and that music, rightly used, may play an important part in directing emotion into useful channels. She argued that a purely intellectual nature is as incomplete as one entirely emotional, and Creak put forward that as music appeals to both sides, it may therefore be truly considered a necessary factor in character building. Her rational perspective shows that she saw the potential of music to act as a vehicle towards achieving an emotional response among ethical congregations.

Many members of South Place had similar convictions, and made music a central part of their activities. There was a choir that rehearsed regularly and performed at the Sunday services, which like other ethical society services included lots of musical elements. The South Place Music Committee had debates among themselves over the quality of the singing at their services, so much so that only the very best were hired as choir members, and were regularly fired for either missing a rehearsal or simply not being good enough. Besides the concerts, the Society had a very active orchestra, set up in 1898 and initially conducted by B. Symons.<sup>236</sup> Adverts in the *South Place Magazine* show rehearsal times and subscription fees (ten shillings per season). The first concert was held on 16 April 1898, and included regular South Place performers such as the violinist John Saunders (1867 – 1919). Friend of the concerts, Walthew, took over as conductor in 1909, and by 1912 there were fifty members. Throughout its existence, the orchestra practiced a mix of old and contemporary music and played at many of the events held at the Society. Each year to complete the chamber music concert season, the orchestra would play a special programme containing music by many of the composers featured in the chamber concerts. In 1912, this received a favourable review from Douglas Donaldson in *The Musical Standard*, who described

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<sup>235</sup> *The Ethical World*, 15 October 1907.

<sup>236</sup> Bartley, *Far from the Fashionable Crowd*, 119.

the orchestra's performance as spirited and fearless.<sup>237</sup> The soirée committee also got the orchestra involved in the South Place social events as entertainment, for example at the Art and Book sales and to accompany dramatic performances.<sup>238</sup> They also entered local competitions, winning the cup for four years in a row at the People's Palace Music Festival.<sup>239</sup> There are many instances of the orchestra performing elsewhere in London. In 1908 – 9, the orchestra performed at the Co-operative Festival at the Crystal Palace, as well as music festivals in Kensington and West London. They also played music by Mendelssohn to accompany an open air performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* put on by the Elizabeth Bessle Comedy Company in Regent's Park, tickets for which were sold by the Women's Freedom League.<sup>240</sup> Significantly, during this season they also performed at three events for the Women's Freedom League and one for the Highgate and North St. Pancras Women's Suffrage Society, where they accompanied a performance of George Bernard Shaw's play *Press Cuttings*.<sup>241</sup> On 2 April 1909 the South Place also put on a performance of James Ward's influential suffrage play *Man and Woman*, accompanied by the South Place Orchestra, with the funds raised going back into the Society.<sup>242</sup> These are some of the more direct ways in which the members of South Place supported women's equality and the suffrage movement through music.

Members and guest speakers also gave lectures about music as part of the Society's lecture series, which demonstrates how music was used as both a means of education and debate throughout the ethical movement, alongside its entertainment value. As part of the Monthly Discussion Conferences held by the Society in 1889, A. W. Hutton led a discussion in February about 'Hymns and Music at Ethical Meetings'.<sup>243</sup> The celebrated singer Harry Plunket-Greene (1885 – 1936) gave lectures at the Society about the 'Interpretation of Song' and Richard Walthew gave a series of lectures called

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<sup>237</sup> D, D. "South Place Orchestra." *Musical Standard* 37, no. 953 (Apr 06, 1912): 215.

<sup>238</sup> SPES/1/10/6: Minute books of the Soirée Committee of South Place Ethical Society, 1895 – 1905.

<sup>239</sup> Bartley, *Far from the fashionable crowd*, 119.

<sup>240</sup> The performance took place on Saturday 11 July 1908 at 8pm in the Botanic Gardens, tickets ranging in price from 7s.6d. to 1s. 1d.) Anon. "Notes and Comments" *South Place Magazine* 13, no. 11 (July 1908): 181 – 86.

<sup>241</sup> SPES/1/1/4: Annual Reports of the Committee of South Place Ethical Society, 1908 – 9; Anon. "Music at South Place" *South Place Magazine* 15, no. 2 (November 1909): 6 – 7.

<sup>242</sup> Anon. "Dramatic Entertainment" *South Place Magazine* 14, no. 8 (May 1909): 125 – 6.

<sup>243</sup> SPES/1/1/3: Annual Reports of the Committee of South Place Ethical Society, 1889 – 90, 17.

‘The Development of Chamber Music’.<sup>244</sup> In relation to Walthew’s lectures, the concert committee wrote in their annual report: ‘The course was most interesting and enjoyable, and [...] they will be really helpful in bringing about a better understanding, and therefore a fuller appreciation, of Chamber Music’.<sup>245</sup> These comments highlight the key reasons why the Society hosted concerts, and reflect Bartley’s discussion about musical lectures that took place at many of the concerts for working class people that were organised during the late-nineteenth century.<sup>246</sup> Swepstone and Troup were among the women who also gave musical lectures, which will be expanded on in their respective chapters.

Another woman who gave musical lectures at South Place was Annie Muirhead (1867 – 1911), a Scottish woman from a large wealthy family.<sup>247</sup> By 1891, she was working as a music teacher and had moved to Hampstead, London and soon became an important member of the Leighton Hall Neighbourhood Guild.<sup>248</sup> Muirhead, along with Alfred J. Clements from South Place, arranged the programmes for their concert series. The guild’s annual report from 1895 describes their work as ‘admirable’ and interestingly also notes ‘the increased attention and intelligence on the part of the audience’, which would have been as important to the guild as it was for South Place Ethical Society.<sup>249</sup> According to a short article in *The Musical Times* (1894), Muirhead also put together a scheme providing ‘Concerts for Children’ in the Kensington and Hampstead districts on Saturday afternoons. The description of this scheme is also very resonant of the ethical movement along with contemporary attitudes towards rational recreation: ‘... they will have frequent opportunities of hearing the best music, and having their attention drawn by a lecturer to the chief beauties of the compositions – in short, of being taught how to *listen*’.<sup>250</sup> Muirhead’s attitudes towards education here show that she was heavily influenced by the middle-class notion of improvement. However, rather than reaching out to the poor, this opportunity was aimed at upper and middle-class families, the reason being that there was a high number of schools in the area and

<sup>244</sup> SPES/7/1/16: South Place Sunday Popular Concert Committee Annual Reports (SPSPC): 1910 – 11.

<sup>245</sup> SPES/7/1/15: South Place Sunday Popular Concert Committee Annual Reports (SPSPC): 1908 – 9.

<sup>246</sup> Bartley, *Far from the fashionable crowd*, 36 – 62.

<sup>247</sup> “Muirhead, Annie.” 1871 Scotland Census, General Register Office for Scotland. 3 April 1871.

<sup>248</sup> “Muirhead, Annie.” Beaconsfield Villas, Hapstead, London. 1891 England, Wales & Scotland census. 5 April 1891.

<sup>249</sup> Spiller, *The Ethical Movement in Great Britain*, 44.

<sup>250</sup> “Occasional Notes.” *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, 35, no. 621 (November 1894): 739.

these children lived too far away from the Regent Street centre where they might have the opportunity to attend concerts. Still, it confirms that Muirhead believed that music should be a significant factor of children's education. The music that was to be played included works by Bach, Handel, Haydn and Mozart, the same canonical composers that she chose to speak about during her lectures at South Place in 1896.<sup>251</sup> The lectures were entitled 'The Makers of Modern Music', and covered the following topics: Bach and the Fugue; Handel and the Oratorio; Haydn and the String Quartet; Mozart and the Opera; and Beethoven and the Sonata. Each included vocal illustrations and took place on a Thursday evening at 7pm.

Music also played an important part in South Place's fundraising and social events. The programme for the South Place Ethical Society Bazaar, held from 16 – 18 November 1898, is a good example of the ways in which music was included in the programme of events. There is a whole section headed 'Music', which includes vocal, violin, flute and organ solos by musicians who often performed in the chamber music concerts. There were also several performances of instrumental music by members of the South Place orchestra, including an eclectic mix of music by Gioachino Rossini, Walter Slaughter, Ludwig Van Beethoven, Joseph Gung'l, Ebenezer Prout, Franz Joseph Haydn, Émile Waldteufel and Edward German.<sup>252</sup> Often instrumentalists would accompany the dramatic performances put on by South Place members to create musical sketches. Such entertainments were a valuable way for South Place to raise funds towards sustaining their organisation, in this case, to help cover the debt on maintaining the building. Members of the orchestra performed in many of the events hosted by South Place, as can be seen in the programmes below (Images 12 - 16). Other subcommittees formed their own musical groups. The Girls' Club put on their own concerts to raise money, with admission charged at sixpence and reserved seats for one shilling.<sup>253</sup> An example of one of their Friday evening programmes from 1892 was made up of a performance of *The Sleeping Beauty* accompanied by music written by Henry Lahee, followed by a selection of chamber music. Images 15 and 16 also demonstrate the types of events where the South Place Rambler's Band would perform, both in

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<sup>251</sup> SPES/7/1/14: South Place Sunday Popular Concert Committee Annual Reports (SPSPC): 1895 – 96.

<sup>252</sup> SPES6/3/2/6/9: Handbook for the bazaar in aid of the debt on the Society's building, 1898.

<sup>253</sup> SPES6/3/2/2/3: Concert programme to be given by the South Place Girls Club, 17 June 1892.

different venues during 1894. The CHES archive is full of similar examples of events where music was an integral feature, and almost always include both men and women from the Society in some capacity.

SPES/6/3/2/2/8

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY,  
SOUTH PLACE, FINSBURY, E.C.  
(Close to Moorgate Street, Broad Street, and Liverpool Street Stations.)

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**Programme of the Entertainment**

IN AID OF THE LENDING LIBRARY.  
To be held in the INSTITUTE,  
On **TUESDAY, 18th FEBRUARY, 1902.**  
DOORS OPEN 7.30 P.M. COMMENCE 8 P.M.

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**“THE SNOWBALL,”**  
*A Farcical Comedy in three Acts, by SYDNEY GRUNDY.*

— CHARACTERS. —

Felix Featherstone . . . . .	ARTHUR E. FENTON.
Uncle John . . . . .	SIDNEY BARRALET.
Harry Prendergast . . . . .	HAROLD SEYLER.
Saunders. . . . .	HERBERT SUTCH.
Mrs. Featherstone . . . . .	E. MAUD SKELLORN.
Ethel Granger . . . . .	IRENE M. REYNOLDS.
Penelope . . . . .	EVA HARRINGTON.

SCENE—A SITTING ROOM.      TIME—PRESENT.

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There will be Intervals of Ten minutes after Acts I. and II., when  
COFFEE and BISCUITS (3d.) will be supplied.

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**The South Place Orchestra,**  
*Under the direction of T. EUSTACE BARRALET, will render the  
following during the evening:—*

OVERTURE	... ..	“Le Caid”	... ..	Ambroise Thomas.
SELECTION	... ..	“Iolanthe”	... ..	Sullivan-Riviere.
TWO HUNGARIAN DANCES	... ..		... ..	Kéler Béla.
MARCH	... ..	“El Capitan”	... ..	Sousa.

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**TICKETS; Numbered & Reserved, 2s.; Side of Hall & Gallery, 1s.;**  
must be obtained in advance, and can be had in the Library (where  
Plan of Seats may be seen), or on application to—  
**HAROLD SEYLER, 61-62, Chancery Lane, W.C.**

**NO MONEY WILL BE TAKEN AT THE DOORS.**



**PROGRAMME**

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**❁ ❁ MONOLOGUE ❁ ❁**  
 By A. CHEVALIER.  
 In which Mr. BERT FATHERS will appear.

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**❁ Cranford ❁**

Three Scenes from a dramatised version of Mrs. GASKELL'S Novel  
 by S. M. DU PRÉ.

**Scene 1. "MORNING CALLS"**

MISS MATTY ... ..	MISS ADA LIDSTONE
MISS BETTY BARKER ... ..	MRS. FLETCHER SMITH
MISS POLE ... ..	MRS. CLEMENTS
MISS MARY SMITH ... ..	MISS IRENE M. REYNOLDS
MARTHA ... ..	MISS MARY RAWLINGS

**Scene 2. "Miss BETTY BARKER'S TEA PARTY"**

MISS BETTY BARKER ... ..	MRS. FLETCHER SMITH
MISS POLE ... ..	MRS. CLEMENTS
MISS MARY SMITH ... ..	MISS IRENE M. REYNOLDS
MRS. FORRESTER ... ..	MRS. FENTON
MISS MATTY ... ..	MISS ADA LIDSTONE
THE HON. MRS. JAMIESON ... ..	MISS A. MATTHEWS
PEGGY ... ..	MISS KATE JARRETT

**Scene 3. "BAD NEWS"**

MISS MATTY ... ..	MISS ADA LIDSTONE
MISS MARY SMITH ... ..	MISS IRENE M. REYNOLDS
MARTHA ... ..	MISS MARY RAWLINGS
JEM HEARN ... ..	ARTHUR E. FENTON

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**❁ ❁ Old Cronies ❁ ❁**  
 A Comedietta by S. THEYRE SMITH.

DR. JACKS ... ..	ROBB LAWSON
CAPTAIN PIGEON ... ..	BERT FATHERS

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*A SELECTION OF MUSIC will be played during the evening by Members  
 of the South Place Orchestra, under the direction of  
 Mr. EUSTACE BARRALET.*

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**COFFEE and BISCUITS, 3d., will be served during the Intervals.**

<sup>255</sup> Image: SPES6/3/2/2/9





**South Place Ethical Society,**  
SOUTH PLACE CHAPEL AND INSTITUTE,  
FINSBURY, E.C.

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**Children's Party,**

On MONDAY, JANUARY 9th, 1899,  
Commence at 6. Terminate at 9.  
Tickets for Children, SIXPENCE; Adults, ONE SHILLING.  
May be obtained from any Member of the Solved Committee, or from the  
Hon. Sec.—Mrs. W. COCKBURN, The Limes, 34 Clyde Road, Croydon.

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### Programme.

Game ... ..  
Dance—Berlin Polka ... .. *Karl Kaps.*  
Shirt Dance by ATHENE SEYLER.  
\* NIGGER \* SONGS. \*  
Dance—Lancers ... "Knight of Saint Patrick" ... .. *Dan Godfrey.*

**At 7 o'clock:**  
\* PUNCH AND JUDY. \*  
Game ... ..  
Dance BY THE MISSES FAIRHALL.  
Overture ... .. "Le Diadème" ... .. *Herman.*

**+ PRINCE NYSEE NOSEY +**  
(A Fairy Extravaganza).  
**Characters:**

PRINCE NYSEE NOSEY ... ..	CECIL HOWARD.
HASSAN BEN FUSSY (Vizier) ... ..	CHRISTIE TAIT.
ALI SHERBET (Court Physician) ... ..	BERT MACKLIN.
SILVER STAR (Queen of the Fairies) ... ..	ALICE PARR.
DARLINETTA	{ GLADYS SWORN. HONOR LIDSTONE. JEANIE ARKLAY.
ROSABELLA	
FLIRTANNA	
NOBLES OF THE COURT ... ..	WILLIE ARKLAY.
ATTENDANTS ... ..	LEONARD MACKLIN.
FAIRIES ... ..	FLO LIDSTONE.
	ATHENE SEYLER.
	EDITH PARR.
	VERA COCKBURN.

SCENE I.—*The Fairy Queen's Bower in Cloudland.*  
SCENE II.—*An Apartment in Prince Nysee Nosey's Palace.*

STAGE MANAGER, &c. ... .. JOSEPH BADCOCK.

Dance—Barn Dance ... .. "Katsura" ... .. *J. H. Nicholson.*  
Game ... ..  
Dance BY Miss GLADYS SWORN.  
Dance—Berlin Polka ... .. *Karl Kaps.*  
Dance—Sir Roger de Coverly.

The Overture and Dance Music by some Members of the South Place Orchestral Society.

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**PRICE ONE PENNY.**

Kenny & Co., PRINTERS, 25 CAMDEN ROAD, LONDON, N.W.

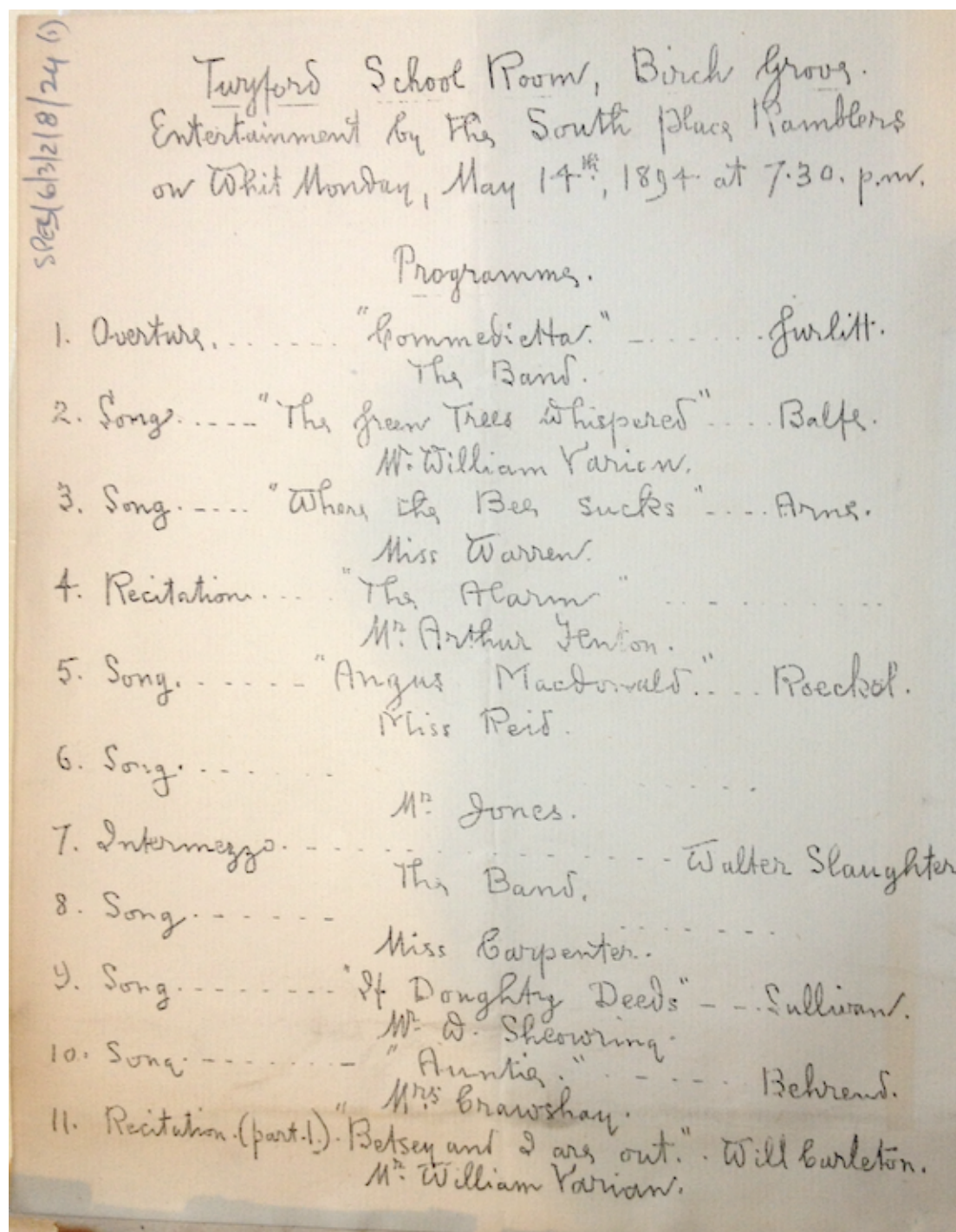




Image 16 - Liliputian Fancy Fair and The Ramblers' Band.<sup>258</sup>

**THE RAMBLERS' BAND**

Will render a varied Selection of Instrumental Music,  
including—

Overture	.. .. "Yelva"	.. ..	Reissiger.
Waltz	.. .. "Ispahan"	.. ..	Royle.
Minuet & Trio	.. ..	.. ..	E. Prout.
March	.. .. "Tommy Atkins"	.. ..	Beaumont.
Intermedio	.. ..	.. ..	W. Slaughter.
Overture..	.. .. "Lestocq"	.. ..	Auber.
Shepherds' Dance (from Henry VIII.)	.. ..	.. ..	E. German.
Waltz	.. .. "Amoretten Tänze"	.. ..	Gung'l.

**Afternoon Teas**

WILL BE SERVED FROM 3.30 P.M.

**INSTITUTE TEA-TRAY, including Cup of } 6d.**  
Tea, Bread and Butter, and Cake - }

Meat, Sandwiches and other Refreshments  
will be provided.

Cup of Tea or Coffee - - - - - 2d.

GLASS OF MILK OR LEMONADE, 1d.

CAKES OF EVERY KIND, etc., etc.

**South Place Eccl<sup>l</sup>ical Society.**

SOUTH PLACE, FINSBURY, E.C.

—A—

**LILIPUTIAN FANCY FAIR**

WILL BE HELD IN  
**SOUTH + PLACE + INSTITUTE.**

In aid of the Debt on the Building, on  
**WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY & FRIDAY, NOV. 7th, 8th & 9th, 1894,**  
Opening each day at 3 p.m., and closing at 10 p.m.

Prices of Admission:—**SERIAL TICKET**, admitting to 3 days, 1/-.  
Wednesday, 1/-; Thursday, 6d.; Friday, 3d.

May be obtained of any member of the Committee, and at the  
Institute, or of the *Hon. Sec.*—  
HELEN MAUDE PARKER, 10, Tollington Park, N.

#### 4.4 Music Causing Controversy

The general consensus was that the music at the ethical societies' concerts, dances and other public events was a success and fulfilled its purpose as both elevating and entertaining. However, opinions about music during the Sunday Services were subject to much more controversy. At the very first musical service at the West London Ethical Society, Palestrina's Mass, 'Pope Marcellus', was sung by the choir, although the words were altered by their ethical leader, Stanton Coit. This caused a debate within the Society and the press over whether it was too bold to try to modernise ancient music through the application of new words. Coit's argument was that the mood and experience of the music is eternal, but its intellectual expression needed updating with man's changed view of the universe.<sup>259</sup> Such questions opened up debates around the preservation and authenticity of music within the Society.

A. S. Toms (1862 – 1941) initiated a wider debate about music at the ethical societies, particularly in regard to the hymns. Toms started off as a member of the St. Pancras Ethical Society. He then joined the Epping Forest Ethical Group, often leading their services by drawing on his talent for reading poetry aloud. After World War One he became an active member of South Place, serving on the general committee for several years, and was a prominent member of the poetry circle.<sup>260</sup> In December 1912, Toms contributed a provocative article titled 'Ethical Hymnology' to *The Ethical World*, a publication that flourished in the years before World War One among ethical society members, and to which Toms was a frequent contributor.<sup>261</sup> This was followed by a very similar paper read by Toms at South Place as part of their discussion series, which was later printed in the *South Place Magazine*.<sup>262</sup> The paper led to a series of responses critiquing the use of music and singing at South Place.

The crux of Toms' argument was that neither the hymns nor the singing at the services was good enough. He suggested that a trio or quartet of Beethoven or Mozart might

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<sup>259</sup> Spiller, *The Ethical Movement in Great Britain*, 86.

<sup>260</sup> Anon. "Obituary: A. S." *The Monthly Record* (August 1941): 14.

<sup>261</sup> Toms, A. S., 'Ethical Hymnology' in *The Ethical World*, 15 December 1912, 178 – 179.

<sup>262</sup> Toms, A. S. "Singing at South Place and Other Ethical Societies: A Paper read for Discussion at South Place Chapel, April 2, 1913, by Mr A. S. Toms." *The Monthly List* 18, no. 4, (July 1913): 4 – 7; Toms, A. S. "Singing at South Place and Other Ethical Societies (concluded): A Paper read for Discussion at South Place Chapel, April 2, 1913, by Mr A. S. Toms." *The Monthly List* 18, no. 8, (August 1913): 4 – 7.

eliminate the difficulties of contradictions in words.<sup>263</sup> However, he did believe that the emotion and character that music brought to the movement was integral to their efforts. There is a link between the 'pure music' that Toms sought for expressing the ethical movement's beliefs, and the purity of the music that the SPSPC committee wanted for their concerts. They claimed to include only that which was 'pure, elevating and inspiring', although this did include vocal music. It is possible that members of the concert committee shared Toms' preference for chamber music over hymns. However, Toms does see the downfall in his plan:

...my belief is that if we do not succeed in singing our message, we shall have no future. It is of little avail to get ideas into the head; they must penetrate into the blood before they possess any real vitality, and when they get there the spirit bursts spontaneously into melody... nothing can atone for the native originality which ought to flow from an association based on moral fervour.<sup>264</sup>

One of the most controversial points of Toms' argument was his claim that there was a higher than normal proportion of people in an ethical society congregation who cannot sing, and he believes this is because 'the excessive culture of the logical or reasoning faculty may conceivably result in an atrophy of some of the forms of emotional expression.'<sup>265</sup> His statement suggests correlations between rationality, emotional capacity and the ability to sing. Unsurprisingly, this comment received several responses from readers of the magazine. One of the first responses was a letter from Josephine Troup sent directly to Toms. Troup felt that it was important to keep the singing as a crucial method of expression for the congregation. Her response made an impression on Toms, who, when repeating the paper at South Place in 1913, was sincerely complimentary about her work at the Society.<sup>266</sup>

Further responses to Toms came from other members of South Place. In September 1913, pioneering secularist and early member of the ethical movement F. J. Gould

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<sup>263</sup> Toms, 'Ethical Hymnology', 178.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid., 179.

<sup>265</sup> Ibid.

<sup>266</sup> Toms, "Singing at South Place and Other Ethical Societies", 5.

(1855 – 1938) wrote in agreement with Toms, reemphasising that the cause of the bad singing was due to the members' lack of spontaneity.<sup>267</sup> A. E. Fenton similarly criticised the members for being too 'rigid' in their approach to singing.<sup>268</sup> The South Place Sunday Concert organiser at this time, A. J. Clements, also contributed to the debate. He was keen to keep the hymns, mostly because he believed they were the best way of providing everyone with an opportunity to take an active role in the service and create a sense of unity. Another response came from H. Smith Webster, the organist at South Place from 1892 until 1927.<sup>269</sup> He defended the hymns and the choir, claiming that the tunes were sung exactly as written and with good determination. He also noted the recent death of Troup, who assisted greatly in the work of the hymns, and called for anyone who may be able to continue her good work. The disputes continued in written form, and were presumably also discussed in person after the editor of *The Monthly List* closed the topic in April 1914.<sup>270</sup> The debate was rich, and whilst it sheds light on the various ways in which music was perceived to both improve and create challenges within the ethical societies, it also throws up a number of questions.

The suggestion that there was a link between the ability to sing with passion and the typical mindset of a South Place attendee (and members of other ethical societies) is riddled with problems. Robert Youngs wrote two articles in response to Toms. In the second, 'Music and Singing at South Place', he listed a number of possible reasons why the singing may be unsatisfactory, all more convincing than the argument that rationalists cannot sing: members did not feel comfortable singing tunes they did not know well, and some may have found it difficult to sing the hymns because of a lack of music education.<sup>271</sup> He also agreed that there was an inconsistency between the sentiments of the anthems and the hymns, and believed that if certain music from oratorios and operas needed to be withdrawn from their repertoire, then it should be, in the hope that the rationalist ideal of life would in time develop its own musical

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<sup>267</sup> Gould, F. J. "Singing at the Ethical Societies". *The Monthly List* 18, no.9 (September 1913): 7.

<sup>268</sup> Fenton, A. E. "Correspondence: Singing at the Ethical Societies". *The Monthly List* 18, no.10 (October 1913): 5 - 6.

<sup>269</sup> Webster, H. Smith. "Correspondence: Singing at the Ethical Societies." *The Monthly List* 19, no.2 (February 1914): 5 - 6.

<sup>270</sup> *The Monthly List* was the new name for the *South Place Magazine*. Other responses include: Young, Robert. "Music and Singing at South Place." *The Monthly List* 19, no.1 (January 1914): 6 – 8; Young, Robert. "Emotion and Rationalism in Ethical Societies." *The Monthly List* 19, no.4 (April 1914): 8 - 9.

<sup>271</sup> Young, Robert. "Ethical Societies and Emotion." *The Monthly List* 18, no.12 (December 1913): 4 - 6.

interpretation. Likewise, C. K. Scott refused to believe that the singing was bad because ethical belief did not lend itself to emotion.<sup>272</sup> He may have been concerned about the reception of his own recently published hymn book, *Social Worship*. However, his argument that the movement's ethos was not sufficiently secure for people to express themselves with conviction mirrors other concerns that members did not feel a connection between the hymns and their values. Perhaps some felt it to be too akin to hymn-singing in church, a familiar practice but one that they had actively rejected. In some cases, people were questioning why music was such an essential part of their practice. Perhaps the reason why Toms' questions about the role of music in the ethical societies elicited such passion was because the ethical movement was still forming its identity as an alternative to religion, and they saw music as a crucial way of representing themselves to the public. The overwhelming response to the discussion of music may have also been fuelled by the strength of response that many people have to music.

More practically, music was a way of enticing new membership through the joy of singing, and the lacklustre singing was puzzling in the context of the concerts, the popularity of which suggested no lack of emotional connection or interest in music among the members and public. It is also interesting to notice that whilst Stanton Coit and the concert committee often spoke about the power of 'pure' classical music, and Toms commented on the detrimental influence of words for professing the aims of the movement, instrumental music alone was clearly not seen as capable of fulfilling the movement's needs, as the only consensus among the writers was that the singing should be retained.

The long-lasting arguments around the purpose and value of the hymns at South Place seem to be more deeply entrenched in debates surrounding the confusions about the core values of the Society and its position within the ethical movement. There was a mixed response when South Place departed from its status as a radical 'religious' society, long tied up in Unitarian history, and became an ethical society. Some old and new members backed the 'ethical' ideology, but others entered the new era of the

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<sup>272</sup> Scott, C. K. "Correspondence: Singing at the Ethical Societies". *The Monthly List* 18, no.10 (October 1913): 6 - 7.

Society with ideas and beliefs still firmly aligned with the previous South Place mindset, causing uncertainty despite the close links. The debates between Toms, Troup, Fenton, Scott and Clements (etc.) do not just reveal confusion about how music ties in with an agnostic belief system or moral code; it also shows that at the heart of the Society there were more significant cracks in the communal understanding of its core values, even by 1912. Whether or not people could or would sing appears to have been used as a locus from which to consider what the members wanted to achieve through singing, and what ideas they wanted to communicate. As C. K. Scott articulated, the conflicts between beliefs in the hymn selections reflect a wider uncertainty and insecurity concerning the theology of the movement. Consequently, people could not use the hymns to express themselves with ease and conviction. It was certainly problematic that Troup compiled *Hymns of Modern Thought* primarily for the Leicester Secular Society and it was later adopted by the ethical societies.<sup>273</sup> Whilst there were many points of similarity between the secular and ethical societies, the ideas and goals of each movement were different enough that the South Place Ethical Society, with a history tied more closely to religion than any other ethical society, probably did not find the same connection to the same hymns. In a letter to Toms, Troup admits that Gould and Robertson had a huge influence on the hymn collections and their focus was on the words avoiding any religious content. Troup was more influenced by music, sentiment, and the tradition of the South Place services. She did not object to the occasional biblical reference, and perhaps other members of South Place felt the same. They may have wished to engage with the hymns for a sense of community and familiarity (perhaps even tradition), rather than a vessel of serious philosophical and intellectual expression. That would have represented a contrast to the stance taken by Emerson, one of the key philosophical influences on the founders of the ethical movement, whose words were often used for hymn music. Emerson rejected societal norms founded on the basis of religion and tradition, and religious hymns — even ‘old favourites’ — would certainly have gone against his position.<sup>274</sup> So perhaps Scott was right in suggesting that a cleaner and more focused belief system in the hymn collection would make the hymns more meaningful to the ethical movement. Yet maybe for long-term members of South Place, finding such a

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<sup>273</sup> It was left in her will to the Hampstead Ethical Society.

<sup>274</sup> Emerson, Ralph Waldo. *The Conduct of Life* (Boston: Ticknor and Field, 1860), 187.



compromise would have been easier said than done. The arguments over the hymns can plausibly be read as members of South Place grappling with concerns over their identity as a community.

Furthermore, Toms' predictions about the ethical movement 'dying out' did actually come true, as throughout the 1920s and 1930s the number of ethical societies in the UK plummeted in favour of humanism. It is possible that the ethical movement's lack of musical unity articulated through this debate contributed to the decline. The relative strength of the American ethical movement, which did not feature hymns, suggests at the very least that musical arguments caused an overall distracting level of friction that sapped attention from more productive debates.

These arguments over devotional music relate to central questions of this thesis. As well as considering the role of music at South Place, they also highlight the influential role of musical women in the movement. The continuing reference to Troup's work highlights the degree to which she was recognised at the time, but many of the other hymns were also written specially for the societies by women. Hymn-writing was considered an acceptable task for women in this period, making hymn-writing a conduit for their views to filter into the ethical societies, affecting, in turn, the way the movement was understood by others. Women did not dominate the written debates over the value of music to the societies. However, in December 1913, Florence A. Law added some practical suggestions to the conversation, identifying the key problem as being exactly how to make the singing worthy of the Society. Her suggestions included encouraging singers into the choir from the Sunday School and ensuring that every week a few audience members were well acquainted with the hymns, thus making them and others more confident about singing.<sup>275</sup>

Law's proposals have a much stronger link to education and training than any of the previous suggestions. Her perspective shows similarities to Creak's lecture at the Manchester Ethical Society, in the sense that both women approached music in a practical way. This subverts the gendered expectation that women were more likely to

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<sup>275</sup> Law, Florence, A. "Correspondence: Singing at the Ethical Societies." *The Monthly List* 18, no.12 (December 1913): 7.

be driven by emotion and shows that the women who were confident enough to write publicly on the subject were not representative in any way of this stereotype. It is telling, however, that whilst women made up a large proportion of ethical society membership and musical groups, only a few wrote to the magazine to join in the debates. It shows that despite each other's support, women were still hesitant to put forward their opinions in what may be considered 'serious' discussion, and despite the encouragement of women's equality at South Place, there was still a very dominant male voice. Nevertheless, through actively participating and often steering the musical activities of the ethical societies, many women were arguably making a greater creative contribution than the men who were philosophising over the matter through the magazine. Through hymn-writing, lecturing, leading the children's choir, and joining in other musical groups, women were both offering and using the opportunity to deploy music as a method of self-improvement and as a way to engage with the ethical movement's values.

### **5.1 Introduction**

Overviews of the story of the South Place chamber music concerts have been written by members of the Society at a few major milestones in the series' history. First was Meadmore's history of the first 1000 concerts, written in 1927, which contains a brief overview of the first forty years, as well as lists of compositions and musicians who had been included in the concerts thus far.<sup>276</sup> The next to be published was to mark the 2000<sup>th</sup> concert, taking the reader up to 1969 and with a new section dedicated to the more recent ensembles.<sup>277</sup> Hawkins later published a slightly updated version in 1987, celebrating the centenary of the concert series.<sup>278</sup> Each of these three publications has informed the following account of the concerts, which is based on a detailed study of the original concert programmes and insights gleaned from the minute books and press reports. The focus will be on the distinctive programming and reception of the concerts, the implications of World War One, and it will prepare the reader for the following chapter, which focuses exclusively on the women musicians involved in the concerts.

### **5.2 The formation of the concerts**

By the 1880s, music had manifested itself as a crucial element of life at the South Place Institute, so the introduction of the concert series was a welcome addition to the Society's events. The concerts were a result of the work of the People's Concert Society, which formed in 1878 with the purpose of 'increasing the popularity of good music by means of cheap concerts'.<sup>279</sup> The idea behind the concerts was initiated by Samuel Barnett who, upon noticing the hypnotic effect of classical music on a working-class church congregation, decided to arrange two instrumental concerts. He believed that the music would help the audience to become more deeply connected to

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<sup>276</sup> Meadmore, W. S., *The Story of a Thousand Concerts: 1887 – 1927* (London: South Place Ethical Society, 1927). Conway Hall Library: 780.78421MEA

<sup>277</sup> Hawkins, Frank, *The Story of Two Thousand Concerts* (Holborn, London: South Place Ethical Society, 1969). Conway Hall Library 780.78421HAW

<sup>278</sup> Hawkins, Frank, *A Hundred Years of Chamber Music*. Holborn (London: South Place Ethical Society, 1987). Conway Hall Library: 780.78421HAW

<sup>279</sup> Bartley, *Far From the Fashionable Crowd*, 67.

religion.<sup>280</sup> It is then ironic that the concerts came to be held at South Place Chapel, home to many of the radical freethinkers of London in 1880. However, it was not the aim of the PCS to proselytise. Some men only agreed to attend the PCS concerts after being reassured that no clergy members would be present. Subsequently, South Place may have appealed even more to certain members of the working-class, looking for musical entertainment that was not religious, at a reasonable price and away from the atmosphere of the music halls.

The concerts were a successful series for the PCS, which set up concert series at a variety of locations across London. The *Monthly Musical Record* reported in 1884 about the concerts at South Place: 'As a rule good artists are secured, and the concerts are always well attended; in fact, often there is not room for all who come'.<sup>281</sup> Nevertheless, in 1886 the PCS decided to end the series at South Place, their reason being a lack of funds to keep them running. Alan Bartley, unconvinced by this explanation, suggests that other factors may have led to this decision. One reason may have been that South Place was too focused on attracting a middle-class audience, thus being inconsistent with the PCS's aim to supply chamber music to under-privileged people. Bartley also suggests that the PCS committee may have come to resent the manipulative methods of the South Place committee, for example, the increased price of hall hire over the years and allowing the chapel to be used for other, potentially rival chamber music concerts throughout the week.<sup>282</sup> He suggests that whatever the reason for the departure, the PCS must have left South Place with mixed feelings; however, later correspondence between the organisations seems to show an amicable relationship.<sup>283</sup>

Seeing their popularity, the South Place committee decided to take over the concerts. A committee was formed to organise the newly named 'South Place Sunday Popular Concerts' (SPSPC), a new series that would continue the tradition that the PCS had started. In his account of the first 1000 concerts, Meadmore addresses the bewildering use of the word 'popular' in the title of a concert series that was more likely to contain

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<sup>280</sup> For further background of the PCS see: Bartley, *Far from the fashionable crowd*, 62 - 106.

<sup>281</sup> "Musical Notes." *The Monthly Musical Record* 14, no. 160 (April 1884): 92-94.

<sup>282</sup> Bartley, *Far from the Fashionable Crowd*, 74.

<sup>283</sup> SPES/7/1/3 – 5: Minutes of the Concert Committee of South Place Ethical Society, 1887 – 1934.

distinctly 'unpopular' chamber music. He recalls the following conversation between audience members: "Is this a classical concert?", "I don't know, it's a Brahms concert", "Oh, I suppose they never do 'The Country Girl'?"<sup>284</sup> The conversation highlights the confusion that was invoked by labelling 'serious' classical music as 'popular', which was clearly sometimes mistaken to mean songs from the music hall, despite the fact that the term 'popular' for chamber music concerts was widely used. The Monday and Saturday Popular Concerts at St James's Hall also had this vaguely misleading term in their title, although on the whole the music programmed was more usual repertoire than that which was selected for the South Place programmes. Following the inaugural series of the 'pops' in 1859, a writer for the *Morning Post* commented:

There was delightful confidence – some detected a certain amount of satire – in the application of the term "popular" to concerts professedly and practically devoted to works which had hitherto been regarded as the reverse of popular – of works previously supposed to be caviar to the multitude.<sup>285</sup>

However, in later years another writer appraised the decision: 'Most speculators would have either altered the name of the entertainment or modified the selection of the compositions performed: Mr. Chappell took a bolder course—he changed the public taste'.<sup>286</sup> It is possible that the South Place committee had a similar goal. Sure enough, over time they greatly influenced the general appreciation for serious chamber works at London concerts. William Weber has also suggested, in reference to the 'pops', that the title was intended to indicate that the repertory did not follow as 'pure' a format as some other concerts, such as those by Ella's Musical Union, a concert series that between 1845 and 1859 had a significant effect on British musical taste.<sup>287</sup> Bartley further suggests that the name was to indicate that the concerts were of a more democratic nature, which could be attended by anyone who could afford the shilling ticket. This is also relevant to the SPSPCs, which were free to attend

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<sup>284</sup> Meadmore, *The Story of a Thousand Concerts*, 6.

<sup>285</sup> Anon. *The Morning Post*, 30 June 1859.

<sup>286</sup> Anon. "Music and Art." *The Yorkshire Post* (09 November 1906): 4.

<sup>287</sup> Ridgewell, Rupert. "Concert Programmes". Accessed September 2018. For further background of Ella's Union see: Bashford, *The Pursuit of High Culture: John Ella and Chamber Music in Victorian London*, 2007.

(although donations were requested by each person attending), meaning that they were available to anyone with the time and ability to travel to Finsbury. Potentially the word 'popular' may also have attracted a wider audience, thus resulting in increased numbers attending the concerts and the possibility of attracting new people to the Society.

### 5.3 Audience

In some ways, under the leadership of the new SPSPC committee, the aims of running the concerts were very much in line with the Ethical Society members' views on the elevating capabilities of interacting with classical music. As Bartley summarized:

The chapel elders appear to have considered their chamber music concerts to be less an expression of their own middle-class culture than as an opportunity to spread enlightenment, an attitude entirely in keeping with the humanist tenets of their Ethical Society. Moreover, the endeavour to maintain an ambience appropriate to the production and reception of high art music, setting an example that became a benchmark for concert audience behaviour, again points to serious intentions.<sup>288</sup>

These achievements were partly met through the concerts' accessibility to the lower classes. Reports on the audience are not always consistent, but overall it does appear that South Place attracted a large 'cosmopolitan' audience. In 1915, an American writer, W. J. Turner, who had visited South Place and been impressed by the concerts, appealed for someone to start up a similar format in the US:

Anyone who wants to really benefit humanity could find no better way than by financially backing an enterprise of this kind... There, where there is often standing room only, you may see an audience of working people enthusiastically applauding Brahms. Why not? Brahms and Beethoven did

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<sup>288</sup> Bartley, *Far from the fashionable crowd*, 127.

not write for professors of counterpoint; they wrote for the man in the street – but no one has ever told him.<sup>289</sup>

His observations sustain the narrative that the concerts were well attended by the working class. Comments on the concert programmes noting poor attendance due to bad weather also suggest that many people were walking from nearby working class areas.<sup>290</sup> The suggestion at the end of the quotation that the lower classes had not previously been ‘told’ about Brahms and Beethoven is obviously an exaggeration, especially as there were already enterprises such as the ‘pops’ and the PCS concerts, but reveals the attitude of some middle-class observers who thought that this was a novel opportunity for the working class. It also mirrors the attitudes of Victorian musical philanthropists that chamber music was a way to ‘benefit’ the community, as well as the South Place objectives of promoting human welfare and advancing knowledge. Records of programme sales in the minute books and the annual reports can also largely support comments on the size of the audience. Bartley claimed that accounts of the programme sales were only available from October 1892 onwards, when he records an average sale of 670 programmes per concert for that season.<sup>291</sup> However, a more in depth look through the minute books has brought to light earlier records that show similar results. The set of data in Table 3 shows that average amount of programmes sold from these seventeen concerts (that occurred over a two-year period) was 681. These figures suggest that, on the basis that not everyone would have bought a programme and max capacity was around 1000, reports of packed out concerts were true on many occasions. Examining the financial information of the concerts also shows that the programme sales and collection were both essential income for ensuring that the concerts broke even. In most cases, the money received from the collection was enough to pay the performers. The money from the programme sales would therefore go towards other costs, including rent, payment to the chapel keeper, piano hire, advertising, flowers for decoration and refreshments for

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<sup>289</sup> Turner, W. J. *New Statesman*, (18 December 1915) in: Meadmore, W. S. “The South Place Chamber Music Concert.” *Music & Letters*, 6, no. 1 (January 1925): 78 – 80.

and SPES/7/1/16: South Place Sunday Popular Concert Committee Annual Reports (SPSPC): 1915 - 6.

<sup>290</sup> Bartley, *Far from the fashionable crowd*, 110 - 1.

<sup>291</sup> Bartley, *Far from the fashionable crowd*, 112.

the artists.<sup>292</sup> The collection was usually made up from around £3 5s in coppers and £1 1s in silvers, suggesting that most people had less money to give.

Table 3 - Account records from the concerts, 1889 – 91.<sup>293</sup>

Date of concert	Number of programmes sold	Revenue from programmes	Revenue from collection	Payment to players
17/02/1889	612	£2 11s	£3 5s 1d	£3 10s 6d
31/03/1889	588	£2 9s	£4 1s 3 ½d	£2 2s
7/04/1889	570	£2 7s 6 ½d	£4 8s 3d	£3 10s 6d
14/04/1889	678	£2 16s 6d	£5 16s 4d	£3 3s 0d
6/10/1889	757	£3 3s 1d	£5 17s 6d	£3 10s 6d
13/10/1889	745	£3 2s 1d	£5 1s 8d	£3 3s
17/11/1889	758	£3 3s 2d	£5 5s 2d	£4 1s
15/12/1889	650	£2 14s 2d	£4 2s 8d	£4 1s
16/02/1890	698	£2 18s 2d	£4 15s 1d	£3 12s 6d
23/02/1890	630	£2 12s 6d	£4 6s 1 ½d	£4 12s
9/03/1890	652	£2 14s 14d	£4 10s 6d	£2 12s 6d
16/03/1890	669	£2 15s 9d	£5 5s 6d	£3 10s 6d
12/10/1890	753	£3 2s 9d	£5 7s 17 ½d	£3 10s 6d
19/10/1890	772	£3 4s 4d	£5 7s 3d	£4 18s 6d
16/11/1890	799	£3 6s 7d	£5 4s 9d	£4 11s 6d
14/12/1890	625	£2 12s 1d	£4 8s 6d	£3 13s 6d
15/02/1891	627	£2 12s 3d	£4 15s 1d	£3 3s

The choice for the PCS and South Place to continue holding the concerts on a Sunday was a fairly controversial one in the late nineteenth century. Although rules with regards to paying for Sunday entertainment were not formally relaxed until 1932, there was agitation from secularists for free Sunday music as early as 1856, when on 13 April private bands were hired to play in London and the provinces as a protest, and crowds of thousands turned up to hear the music.<sup>294</sup> Venues hosting Sunday concerts avoided prosecution in later years by taking no charge at the door, gaining some income to support the concert through a collection. This is how the SPSPC committee chose to operate from the start until 1945 when a one shilling admission charge was introduced, as the committee realised a collection would not be sufficient in the post-

<sup>292</sup> Annual balance sheets from SPES/7/1/3: Minutes of the Concert Committee of South Place Ethical Society.

<sup>293</sup> Data collected from SPES/7/1/3: Minutes of the Concert Committee of South Place Ethical Society.

<sup>294</sup> Schwarz, *Victorian Infidels*, 260.



war financial climate.<sup>295</sup> For the original committee, the decision to keep the concerts on a Sunday was likely an easy one. A group of rationalists working within a radical institution would probably have welcomed the chance to support organisations such as the National Sunday League and the Free Sunday League in their bid to move away from Sabbatarianism. Although the SPSPC committee potentially could have made more money by moving the concerts to a different day, avoiding the many financial difficulties that were to come through the years, they probably held a similar attitude to the PCS about hosting the concerts on Sunday, as it was the most likely day to attract the working classes. The PCS believed that the working man would enjoy the music best on a Sunday evening, after he has had some time to relax and be refreshed by the music. They documented in 1884 that the Sunday concerts had been ‘...the most numerous, the best attended, and the most appreciated’ in comparison to concerts held on other days during the week.<sup>296</sup> It was also noted by *The Musical Times* the same year: ‘It is felt that the combined advantages of cultivating a taste for good music and of keeping the people from the public houses on the day of rest far outweigh any scruples as to giving musical performances on Sundays’.<sup>297</sup> Members of the Ethical Movement who were of a similar mind-set to Stanton Coit would also have agreed with this advantage.

Money was an issue throughout most of the forty-year period for the concert committee. Whilst there was a high number of programme sales and clearly high attendance for many of the concerts, getting people to donate the appropriate amount was a continuous battle. Potentially, this is because of the substantial working-class portion of the audience, who may not have had the spare income to give as much as the concert committee wished for. As a report in *The Times* observed: ‘the merit of the endeavour is to some extent its greatest difficulty. Those who benefit most largely by the concerts are least able to contribute towards their expense’.<sup>298</sup> Bartley estimates from contemporary balance sheets that the average concert-goer put less than two pence into the collection box. The minute books show that Clements

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<sup>295</sup> SPES/7/1/19: South Place Sunday Popular Concert Committee Annual Reports (SPSPC): 1887 – 1950. In 1945 the concerts were also supplemented by an Arts Council grant. Tickets are now £10 and free for under 25’s.

<sup>296</sup> Anon. “The People’s Concert Society.” *The Musical Standard*, 26, no. 1026 (29 March 1884): 195 – 6.

<sup>297</sup> Bartley, *Far from the Fashionable Crowd*, 31 – 35.

<sup>298</sup> Bartley, *Far from the Fashionable Crowd*, 122.

often made an appeal from the platform for more generous donations in order to reduce the deficit, and the same request was often noted on the programme.

#### 5.4 The South Place Sunday Popular Concert Committee

The original SPSPC committee was made up of William Varian, W. H. Fenton, James Birnbaum, John H. K. Todd, and Alfred J. Clements, with George Hickson and Caroline Fletcher as ex-officios.<sup>299</sup> Hickson and Fletcher (soon to become known as Mrs C. Fletcher-Smith) had both been on the music committee since the 1870s and Fletcher-Smith was the only woman to continue during the first year of the concerts. There was clearly an agenda to ask more women to join. As early as 1887, Clara Robson was invited onto the committee, but declined, although this did not hold her back from having a successful singing career at South Place.<sup>300</sup> The following year, Mervyn Keatinge (1858 – 1947) joined the committee and became a longstanding and active member. Keatinge also performed at Queen's Hall, the Portman Rooms and at the Savoy Theatre, where she played the Countess Montebello in the operetta *The Ferry Girl* by Annie Jessie Fortescue Harrison.<sup>301</sup> In 1889, Josephine Troup and Lena Maitland were also both requested to join, but both declined. It was then suggested to ask Minnie Summer, who did agree to join and regularly attended meetings until she left in 1891.

During the first forty years of the committee, sixty-nine women joined the committee, whose names and length of service are listed in Appendix 1. The greatest number of women on the committee at any one time was sixteen in 1923, along with twelve men, showing that the committee's early endeavours to get more women on the committee were successful.<sup>302</sup> Unfortunately, the absence of the 1892 – 1906 minute book makes it difficult to know how much participation women had in the general running of the concerts during that period. Throughout the early years, most members of the

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<sup>299</sup> SPES/7/1/14: South Place Sunday Popular Concert Committee Annual Reports (SPSPC): 1887 – 8.

<sup>300</sup> SPES/7/1/3: Minutes of the Concert Committee of South Place Ethical Society, 1887 – 91.

<sup>301</sup> "London Concerts and Recitals." *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, 40, no. 677 (July 1899): 473; "Lady Arthur Hill's Operetta." *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, 31, no. 568 (June 1890): 346 – 347; "Miscellaneous Concert." *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, 33, no. 593 (July 1892): 428.

<sup>302</sup> SPES/7/1/17: South Place Sunday Popular Concert Committee Annual Reports (SPSPC): 1923 - 4.

committee were active participants in organising and running the concerts. Among them, Alfred J. Clements (1858 – 1938) is the most recognised name today and appears to have taken on a significant amount of the work as secretary, a role that he held for over fifty years. In December 1889, it was agreed by the committee that in the future the secretary should make the engagements, although throughout the early years many members helped to find musicians.<sup>303</sup> The choice of programme, however, was left mostly to Clements' discretion, a factor that Bartley attributes to the longevity of the concerts, as he was able to plan coherent yet diverse programmes through his extensive knowledge of chamber music.<sup>304</sup> As printing was his trade, Clements was also in charge of printing the programmes. Bartley deduces that these arrangements were made informally and that there was likely no charge, as payments do not show up in the accounts. However, the minute books show that regular payments were made for printing, although presumably at a reduced rate.<sup>305</sup> His influence was so great overall that in 1926 he was awarded the Cobbett Medal for Services to the Art of Chamber Music.<sup>306</sup>

Other members of the Society had different roles. For example, the descriptive programme notes were written by many contributors, particularly S. Dean Grimson, Walter Gandy or W. J. Mitson.<sup>307</sup> Usually the treasurer was in charge of arranging advertisements for the concerts, most commonly in *The Telegraph*, *The Musical Times* and *The Musical Standard*. These particular outlets suggest that whilst South Place aimed to attract the working-classes, they were also interested in a middle-class audience, probably to help defray the expenses.

At times, Bartley can be fairly disparaging about the attitude of the SPSPC committee towards their finances. He suggests that there was no intention from the South Place to subsidise the PCS concerts before they were taken over in 1887 and notes how South Place often did not pay their performers at the same rate as other places.<sup>308</sup> Yet it is important to note that the SPSPC were running mostly independently from the

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<sup>303</sup> SPES/7/1/3 - 4: Minutes of the Concert Committee of South Place Ethical Society.

<sup>304</sup> Bartley, *Far from the Fashionable Crowd*, 113.

<sup>305</sup> SPES/7/1/3 - 4: Minutes of the Concert Committee of South Place Ethical Society.

<sup>306</sup> Meadmore, *The Story of a Thousand Concerts*, 4.

<sup>307</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>308</sup> *Ibid.*, 108 & 121 – 4.

general committee, and were required to submit a detailed account of their achievements and finances at the end of each year. The endless requests for more money from the audience were only ever to cover necessary costs.<sup>309</sup> Furthermore, whilst they may have charged other groups such as the dance committee for use of the organ, in many ways they put the money they received to sensible use. Although they let many artists play for free and perhaps did not offer others as much as they should, in many instances they showed greater fairness by paying men and women equally. For example, the 1916 balance sheet shows that Myra Hess, Margery Bentwich and Thelma Bentwich were paid the same as Frederick Ranalow.<sup>310</sup> Whilst this may have been partly influenced by the fact that Myra Hess (aged 26) was fairly well known at this point in her career, it was not a standalone incident and was extremely impressive considering that over 100 years later there are still debates across the world about equal pay between men and women in the music industry.

## 5.5 Repertoire

### Vocal music

When the concerts were initially set up by the PCS, the programmes followed a very similar format to the successful Monday and Saturday Pops, which contained a mix of ensemble pieces, instrumental solos and vocal music.<sup>311</sup> Songs were a regular feature of many British concerts during the Victorian period and into the early twentieth century. As well as being a regular and popular feature of chamber music concerts, songs were performed in many other situations. Derek Scott has written about the social functions and perceptions of vocal music in contexts such as drawing-room concerts, ballad concerts and music halls.<sup>312</sup> Bartley identified that the inclusion of vocal music in chamber music concerts was considered necessary to attract a working-class audience.<sup>313</sup> It was often assumed by concert organisers that people of the lower classes enjoyed serious chamber works but would not sit through a long piece without interruptions of vocal music. The PCS and the SPSPC committee never gave in to this

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<sup>309</sup> SPES/7/1/3 – 5: Minutes of the Concert Committee of South Place Ethical Society, 1887 – 1934.

<sup>310</sup> SPES/7/1/13: Cash accounts of South Place Sunday Popular Concerts, 1908 – 1919.

<sup>311</sup> The same format had been used in earlier years at John Ella's chamber concerts and others subsequently.

<sup>312</sup> Scott, Derek B. "Music and Social Class in Victorian London". Accessed August 2019.

<http://www.victorianweb.org/mt/dbscott/11.html>

<sup>313</sup> Bartley, *Far From the Fashionable Crowd*, 85.

trend; they included vocal music as an essential part of the programme for many years, but only ‘serious’ vocal music, and never interjected part way through another work. Even in the years before the concerts, the soirée committee ruled out the inclusion of comic songs in their events.<sup>314</sup> Chapter 6.2 covers in more detail the vocal music that was programmed at South Place by women composers.

### **Contemporary and British music**

The music curated for the concerts was described in the *South Place Magazine* as ‘pure, elevating and inspiring’ and the annual reports of the concert committee often state that they are keen to play ‘lesser-known works well deserving of occasional hearing’, both old and new.<sup>315</sup> Contemporary music was programmed by European composers such as Eduard Schütt (1856 – 1933), Friedrich Kiel (1821 – 1885), Hermann Goetz (1840 - 1876), Eduard Behm (1862 – 1946) and Arnold Schoenberg (1874 – 1951), alongside the more expected Austro-Germanic classical repertoire. From the sample of concerts analysed by Bartley, he recorded the most regularly programmed composers as Beethoven, Brahms, Mozart, Dvorak, Schumann, Mendelssohn, Haydn, Walthew and Tchaikovsky.<sup>316</sup> Out of the 1006 concerts given between 1887 and 1927, 409 composers were represented and 123 (30%) of these were British. Clements was keen to promote contemporary British composers, and this shows in comparison to the other concert series analysed by Bartley, all of which had figures of around 17% British composers.<sup>317</sup> It is unlikely that many other concert series in London at this time rivalled this figure, particularly as it was perceived that British composers would not attract large audiences. An unusual appearance in South Place’s top ten chamber works is Stanford’s Piano Quintet (Op. 25). It is less surprising that Walthew appears among the most programmed composers, considering his close links with the Society.<sup>318</sup> The regularity of his music in the programmes may have been a way of the committee showing their gratitude, but notes in the annual reports and the programmes also indicate that the audience often very much enjoyed Walthew’s music. Often his music was programmed in the ‘Modern British Chamber Music’

<sup>314</sup> SPES/1/10/5: Minute books of the Soirée Committee of South Place Ethical Society, 1879 – 90.

<sup>315</sup> W. T. R. “Musical Notes.” *South Place Magazine* 5, no. 2 (November 1899): 29; SPES/7/1/14: South Place Sunday Popular Concert Committee Annual Reports (SPSPC): 1887 – 8.

<sup>316</sup> Bartley, *Far from the Fashionable Crowd*, 273.

<sup>317</sup> *Ibid.*, 274.

<sup>318</sup> Noted in Chapter 2.

concerts that from 1899 onwards featured at least once a year under Clements' direction. The first concert of this kind included music by Charles Villiers Stanford (1852 – 1924), Arthur Goring Thomas (1850 – 1892), William Sterndale Bennet (1816 – 1875), Alexander Mackenzie (1847 – 1935), Hubert Parry (1848 – 1918), Walthew and Troup.<sup>319</sup> Several of the compositions were premieres and featured the composers as performers of their own works. Through the season in 1906, quartets led by Grimson, Wessely and Saunders performed the six winning compositions of W. W. Cobbett's prize for a Phantasy string quartet, featuring works by Haydn Wood (1883 – 1959), James Friskin (1886 – 1967), Frank Bridge (1879 – 1941), William Y. Hurlstone (1876 – 1906), Harry Waldo Warner (1874 – 1945) and Joseph Holbrooke (1878 – 1958).<sup>320</sup> During the same season, another British concert included music by Sweptstone, Holbrooke, Walthew and Ernest Austin (1874 – 1947).<sup>321</sup> Other contemporary British male composers whose music was performed at South Place during this period include: Algernon Ashton (1859 – 1937), Arnold Bax (1883 – 1953), Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875 – 1912), Edward Elgar (1857 – 1934), Harry Farjeon (1878 – 1948), Percy Grainger (1882 – 1961), Hamilton Harty (1879 – 1941), John Ireland (1879 – 1962), Ernest J. S. Moeran (1894 – 1950), Arthur Somervell (1863 – 1937), Joseph Speaight (1868 – 1947), Henry Walford Davies (1868 – 1941) and Ernest Walker (1870 – 1949).

### Special concerts

As well as British concerts, the SPSPC committee organised other special concerts throughout each year. Composer concerts were a feature of the PCS, whose first recorded example is a Beethoven concert from 16 March 1884.<sup>322</sup> South Place continued this theme, usually basing the concerts on the most popular composers of chamber music. Between 1887 and 1927 this included: Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 – 1750) [5], Ludwig van Beethoven (1827 – 1770) [15], Brahms (1833 – 1897) [12], Walford Davies [1], Dvorak (1841 – 1904) [3], Elgar [1], Franck [2], Robert Fuchs (1847 – 1927) [1], Grieg (1843 – 1907) [1], Joseph Haydn (1732 – 1809) [1], Henschel (1850 – 1934) [1], Benoit (Benno) Hollander (1853 – 1942) [2], Joseph Jongen (1873 – 1953) [1], Felix Mendelssohn (1809 – 1847) [4], Wolfgang Mozart (1756 – 1791) [6], Parry [2],

<sup>319</sup> SPES: Concert Programme. 25<sup>th</sup> concert of the 13<sup>th</sup> season, 26 March 1889.

<sup>320</sup> SPES/7/1/15: South Place Sunday Popular Concert Committee Annual Reports (SPSPC): 1906 - 7.

<sup>321</sup> SPES: Concert Programme. 17<sup>th</sup> concert of the 21<sup>st</sup> season, 10 February 1907.

<sup>322</sup> Bartley, *Far from the Fashionable Crowd*, 88 - 9.

Franz Schubert (1797 – 1828) [12], Robert Schumann (1810 – 1856) [6], Stanford [4], Richard Strauss (1864 – 1949) [1], Pyotr Ilich Tchaikovsky (1840 – 1893) [9], Walthew [5] and Richard Wagner (1813 – 1883) [1].<sup>323</sup>

One of the more unusual among these was the concert dedicated to Jongen in 1915, during which he played the piano in his Trio in B Minor, Quartet in E $\flat$  and Poem for Cello and Piano (arranged from the orchestral score).<sup>324</sup> A concert dedicated to the better-known César Franck (1822 – 1890), who was also Belgian, occurred in the same season, with Jongen on the piano and organ.<sup>325</sup> Promoting their music was one way South Place showed their support to the Belgians during the war. Besides Walthew, Stanford was another British composer to have his own concert during this period, performed by John Saunder's String Quartet, with Percy Grainger as pianist and Plunket Greene as vocalist.<sup>326</sup> Hollander was also among the lesser known composers who had special concerts given at South Place, and was among the many who were associated with the Guildhall School of Music, where he taught during the 1890s.<sup>327</sup> National concerts were also a regular occurrence. As well as the seventeen British concerts, there were ten Scandinavian, nine Irish, four French, four Scottish, two Belgian, two Russian, one Italian and one Slavonic concert. These concerts also usually featured contemporary composers from their respective countries. Other themed concerts include the afore-mentioned women composers' concert, two ancient music concerts, five wind chamber music concerts, and two 'Opus 1' concerts.

### **Plebiscite concerts**

Between 1887 and 1927 the 'plebiscite' concerts were also introduced for the first time in the thirty-ninth and fortieth seasons, where the audience voted for the programme (see Image 17).<sup>328</sup> For the first of these, held on 22 February 1925, the committee only received a disappointing sixty votes, ten of which they dismissed

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<sup>323</sup> Number in square brackets [ ] represents how many times a concert was held in the composer's name. Information from concert programmes and Meadmore, *The Story of a Thousand Concerts*, 40.

<sup>324</sup> SPES: Concert programme. 9<sup>th</sup> concert of the 30<sup>th</sup> season, 28 November 1915.

<sup>325</sup> SPES: Concert programme. 14<sup>th</sup> concert of the 30<sup>th</sup> season, 9 January 1916.

<sup>326</sup> SPES Concert programmes: 10<sup>th</sup> concert of the 19<sup>th</sup> season, 4 Dec 1904.

<sup>327</sup> Mitson, W. J. "Hollander, Benoit" in Cobbett, Walter Willson. *Cobbett's Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music: Volume II*. Reprint. by Colin Mason (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 567.

<sup>328</sup> SPES: Concert programmes: 19<sup>th</sup> concert of the 39<sup>th</sup> season, 22 February 1925; 21<sup>st</sup> concert of the 40<sup>th</sup> season, 28 February 1926.

because voters had not followed the required rules.<sup>329</sup> Nevertheless, the continuation of this format after 1927 suggests the audience became more engaged in these opportunities. The only two to occur in the first thousand concerts reveal the effect on musical taste that South Place had on its audience. The larger works bookending each programme were all popular Austro-Germanic works by Beethoven, Schumann, Schubert and Brahms, perhaps indicating that South Place's diverse programmes did not have enough influence to encourage their audience to pick music outside of the favourite Classical and Romantic composers of the past. However, a note in the first programme tells the audience that works by Debussy, Dvorak and Elgar also received a high proportion of votes. Also, in the plebiscite concert from 6 March 1927 (the 1002<sup>nd</sup> concert), more unexpected works by Smetana and Goldmark won the vote.<sup>330</sup> Furthermore, many of the songs and shorter instrumental works voted for were by British composers. The first plebiscite concert featured songs by George Butterworth, Peter Warlock, Walford Davies and Armstong Gibbs, followed by a selection of folk songs from different English counties, and one simply designated as 'Irish'. The concert in 1926 was similarly punctuated with songs by Vaughan Williams, Thomas Dunhill (1877 – 1946), Philip Napier Miles (1865 – 1935), Walford Davies and Hubert Parry, as well as a song by the Norwegian composer Sigurd Lie and a piano sonata by American composer Edward Macdowell. An encore from this concert also brought in an arrangement by Amelia Lehmann of Antonio Secchi's *Love Me or Not*, the only appearance of any woman composer in either programme. Pre-1914 it would have been more surprising not to see at least a song composed by a woman in the programmes, as they had been much more visible in the programmes up until this point. The steady decline of their inclusion in post-1914 concerts may have contributed to their absence in any of the voting, and reflective of a wider departure away from the 'genre' of nineteenth-century songs by women and a hesitation by the South Place committee to embrace the new generation of women composers.

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<sup>329</sup> In most cases because voters forgot to provide their address or suggested works outside of the suggested scheme of the programme such as symphonies. SPES: Concert programme. 20<sup>th</sup> concert of the 39<sup>th</sup> season, 22 February 1925.

<sup>330</sup> SPES: Concert programme. 22<sup>nd</sup> concert of the 41<sup>st</sup> season, March 6 1927. Works included: Quartet in E Minor (*Aus meinem Leben*) for two violins, viola and cello by Smetana and Quintet for piano, two violins, viola and cello by Goldmark which received a 'very enthusiastic recall'.



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**PRICE TWOPENCE.**

**SOUTH PLACE SUNDAY POPULAR CONCERTS**

**SOUTH PLACE INSTITUTE, SOUTH PLACE, FINSBURY, E.C. 2.**  
(Near Moorgate Street, Broad Street, Liverpool Street and Tube Stations.)

**TWENTIETH CONCERT OF THIRTY-NINTH SEASON (949TH CONCERT)**  
**Sunday, February 22nd, 1925, at 6.30 p.m. Doors open at 6.10.**

**PLEBISCITE (Instrumental) PROGRAMME.**

1. QUARTET IN B FLAT, Op. 18, No. 6, for Two Violins, Viola and Violoncello ... .. Beethoven (1770—1827)  
(Fifth time at these Concerts. Last played on February 14th, 1897.)  
i. Allegro con brio. ii. Adagio (La Malinconia)—Allegretto quasi Allegro—Prestissimo. iii. Scherzo and Trio: Allegro.  
MESSRS. SAMUEL KUTCHER, HUGO RIGNOLE, JAMES LOCKYER, JOHN BARBIROLLI.

2. SONGS ... (a) Loveliest of Trees ... George Butterworth (b) Sleep ... Peter Warlock.  
(c) An Uncouth Love Song ... Walford Davies (d) In Youth is Pleasure ... Armstrong Gibbs.  
DR. TOM GOODEY. Pianoforte: Miss DOROTHY SAUNDERS.

(a) LOVELIEST OF TREES.  
(Words not allowed to be printed on programmes.)  
You gentle nymphs that on these meadows stray,  
And oft relate the loves of shepherds young,  
Come, sit you down, for if you please to stay,  
Now may you hear an uncouth passion sung.  
A lad there is, and I am that poor groom,  
That's fall'n in love and cannot tell with whom.

(b) SLEEP.  
Come sleep and with thy sweet deceiving,  
Lock me in delight awhile.  
Let some pleasing dream beguile  
All my fancy, that from thence  
There may steal an influence,  
All my powers of care bereaving.  
Though but a shadow, but a sliding,  
Let me know some little joy.  
We that suffer long annoy  
Are contented with a thought  
Through an idle fancy wrought.  
Oh, let my joys have some abiding.  
*John Fletcher.*

(c) AN UNCOUTH LOVE SONG.  
Oh! do not smile at sorrows as a jest,  
With others' cares good natures moved be,  
And I should weep if you had my unrest,  
Then at my grief, how can you merry be.  
Ah, where is tender pity now become?  
I am in love and cannot tell with whom.  
Once in a dream, methought my love I viewed,  
But never, waking, could her face behold:  
And, doubtless, that resemblance was but  
shewed  
That more my tired heart torment it should.  
For since that time more grieved I am become  
And more in love, I cannot tell with whom.

(d) IN YOUTH IS PLEASURE.  
In a harbour green asleep, whereas I lay,  
The byrdes sang swete in the middes of the day,  
I dreamed fast of mirth and play.  
In youth is pleasure.  
Methought I walked still to and fro,  
And from her company I could not go  
But when I waked it was not so.  
In youth is pleasure.  
Therefore my heart is surely pyght,  
Of her alone to have a sight,  
Which is my joy and heart's delight.  
In youth is pleasure.  
*Robert Wever.*

3. PIANOFORTE SOLO ... .. Sonata in F minor, Op 57 (Appassionata) ... .. Beethoven  
(Fourth time at these Concerts. Last played on March 3rd, 1922.)  
1. Assai Allegro. ii. Andante con moto—iii. Allegro ma non troppo—Presto.  
MR. LLOYD POWELL. *3 Recalls*

**INTERVAL FOR COLLECTION TO DEFRAY EXPENSES.**

4. FOLK SONGS ... (a) Abroad as I was walking ... Hampshire. (b) Roving in the Dew ... Sussex.  
(c) Beautiful Nancy ... Hampshire. (d) Seventeen come Sunday ... Sussex.  
(e) Must I go bound? ... Irish. (f) When this Old Hat was New ... Northumbrian.  
DR. TOM GOODEY. Pianoforte: Miss DOROTHY SAUNDERS.

(a) ABROAD AS I WAS WALKING.  
Abroad as I was walking,  
Down by some green wood side,  
I met a young girl singing,  
"I wish I were a bride."  
I thank you, pretty fair maid,  
For singing of your song,  
It's I myself shall marry you.  
"Kind sir, I am too young."  
"The younger the better,  
More fitting for my bride,  
That all the world may plainly see,  
I won a pretty maid."  
Nine times I kissed her ruby lips,  
I viewed her sparkling eye,  
I took her by the hily-white hand,  
My lovely bride to be.

(b) ROVING IN THE DEW.  
Where are you going to, my pretty fair maid?  
Red rosy cheeks and coal-black hair.  
I'm going a-milking, kind sir, she answered me,  
For roving in the dew makes the milk maids fair.

What is your father, then, my pretty fair maid?  
Red rosy, etc.  
My father's a farmer, kind sir, she answered me,  
For roving, etc.  
What is your mother, then, my pretty fair maid?  
Red rosy, etc.  
The wife of my father, kind sir, she answered me,  
For roving, etc.  
May I come along with you, my pretty fair maid?  
Red rosy, etc.  
Just as it please you, kind sir, she answered me,  
For roving, etc.  
Suppose I ran away from you, my pretty fair maid,  
Red rosy, etc.  
The devil may run after you, I will stand and laugh at you,  
For roving, etc.

(c) BEAUTIFUL NANCY.  
As beautiful Nancy was a-walking one day,  
She met a young sailor upon the highway.  
Said he, "My pretty fair maid, where are you a-going,  
Where are you a-going, tell me pretty maid?"  
"I am searching for Jamie, for young Jamie my dear.  
I have not a-seen him for more than nine year;  
But while he's absent a maid I will live and die,"  
But little did she think it was young Jamie so nigh.  
Then Jamie he stood as long as he could forebear,  
And then he made himself beknown to his dear.  
She denied lords and squires for young Jamie her dear.  
And now she's possessed of nine hundred a year.

*Remember the gentle maid. Give an Ode to the Sunwell*

*SPC/P/39/20*

Another special series of concerts were the John Saunders memorial concerts. Saunders was regarded as one of the finest quartet leaders of his day and appeared at 239 concerts between 1891 and 1918. Appearances of his ensemble were much higher than any other quartet at the time. At times when the SPSPC committee was struggling with finances, he paid for extra performers himself. Five concerts were held in his honour during 1920 after his death.<sup>332</sup> The programmes include lists of music that he played at South Place, including a high proportion of music by British composers, including Swebstone and Troup (Image 18).

MUSIC PERFORMED BY JOHN SAUNDERS AT THESE CONCERTS			
and the number of times each work was played by him			
Works by British Composers.			
<i>Saxtels</i>	Harty A Op 5 ... 1	<i>String Trios</i>	Coleridge-Taylor—
Holbrooke Op 33 ... 1	Holbrooke Phantasy ... 1	Walthew Three Pieces ... 1	Two Gipsy Movts. ... 1
" Op 40 ... 2	" Two Impressions ... 1	" Five Diversions ... 1	Lament and Tambourine ... 1
<i>String Quintets</i>	Hurlstone Phantasy ... 1	<i>Piano Trios</i>	Valse and Gipsy Dance ... 1
Coleridge-Taylor—	Onslow A mi Op 4 No. 3 ... 1	Barley Op 11 ... 1	Two African Dances ... 2
F sharp mi (Clar) ... 3	Speaight G mi ... 1	Cusins C mi ... 1	Elgar La Capricieuse ... 4
Holbrooke Op 27 (Clar) ... 1	" Poem ... 1	Holbrooke D Op 36 (Horn) ... 1	Foulds Ballade and Refrain Rocooco ... 1
Onslow C mi Op 80 ... 1	" Shakespeare ... 3	Parry E mi ... 2	Holbrooke Legend ... 1
Sweepstone D (Horn) ... 2	Fairy Characters ... 2	Stanford G mi Op 73 ... 1	" Ballade ... 1
Stanford F Op 85 ... 1	" D mi Op 64 ... 2	Verne-Bredt, Alice C mi ... 1	" Caprice ... 1
Walker B fl mi (Horn) ... 4	" G mi Op 99 ... 1	Walthew C mi (Clar) ... 4	" Romantic Concerto ... 1
Walthew E fl (Clar) ... 1	Troup Romance ... 1	" G ... 5	Mackenzie Benedictus ... 1
<i>Piano Quintets</i>	Walthew E ... 2	" D ... 2	" Concerto (Andante) ... 1
Friskin C mi Op 1 ... 1	" B fl ... 1	<i>Piano and Violin Duets</i>	Speaight Albumblatt ... 2
Harty F Op 12 ... 2	" E fl ... 2	Austin, Ernest Poem ... 1	" Serenade ... 2
Holbrooke G mi Op 49 ... 3	" Six Lyrical Pieces ... 2	Hinton Suite Op 20 ... 1	" Berceuse ... 2
Prout G Op 3 ... 1	Warner, Waldo—	Holbrooke Sonata A Op 6 ... 1	" Spanish Love Song ... 1
Speaight E fl ... 1	Phantasy D ... 1	Stanford Caoine ... 2	Sweepstone Lament ... 1
Stanford D mi Op 25 ... 10	Phantasy F ... 1	" Jig ... 3	Walthew Three Sketches ... 2
Sweepstone F mi ... 1	<i>Piano Quartets</i>	" War Song ... 1	" Caprice—
" E mi ... 2	Hurlstone E mi ... 2	" Hush Song ... 1	Impromptu ... 6
Walthew F mi ... 4	Speaight C ... 1	" Reel ... 2	" Caprice (Andante) ... 1
" Phantasy ... 4	Standford F Op 15 ... 1	Walthew Sonata di Camera ... 4	
<i>String Quartets</i>	Sweepstone A mi ... 1		
Boyes E mi ... 1	Walker C mi ... 1		
Davies, Walford—	Walthew G mi ... 7		
Peter Pan ... 1			
Six Pastorals ... 1			
Prospect ... 1			

## 5.6 Performers and the press

<sup>332</sup> SPES: Concert programmes: 15<sup>th</sup> concert of the 34<sup>th</sup> season, 18 January 1920; 19<sup>th</sup> concert of the 34<sup>th</sup> season, 15 February 1920; 26<sup>th</sup> concert of the 34<sup>th</sup> season, 11 April 1920; 28<sup>th</sup> concert of the 34<sup>th</sup> season 2 May 1920; 30<sup>th</sup> concert of the 24<sup>th</sup> season, 16 May 1920.

<sup>333</sup> SPES: Concert programme. 15<sup>th</sup> concert of the 34<sup>th</sup> season, 18 January 1920.

Charles Crabbe and May Mukle, and ensembles such as the Queen's Hall Beatrice Langley Quartet, the Wessley Quartet and Amina Goodwin's London Piano Trio.<sup>334</sup>

The diverse programmes and high quality performers attracted national and international press coverage. *The Manchester Guardian* described the concerts as 'one of the finest centres in England for chamber music' and regarded the audience as 'thoroughly sympathetic and appreciative... because a thoroughly musicianly one'.<sup>335</sup> This opinion seems to have been drawn from the attentiveness of the audience rather than any hard evidence of audiences understanding the music; however, the fact that the concerts had regular attendees does suggest that as their knowledge of repertoire expanded, so would their ability to appreciate and criticise the music.

In 1898, *The Daily Graphic* reported on the concerts with some valuable rare images of what the concerts may have looked like pre-twentieth century.<sup>336</sup> The female violinists in Images 20 and 22 are shown wearing expensive looking clothing, indicating a certain level of wealth.<sup>337</sup> The same can be said for the two women at the foreground of Image 19 and the women wearing heavily decorated hats in Image 23. The men in Image 21, one being a member of the committee collecting donations for the concerts, also appear to be middle-class based on their smart suits. On the other hand, the young boy at the front of Image 19 is wearing a peak cap and working-class attire. In the same drawing, the late-comers are shown talking and not paying much attention, clearly not listening to the music with any concentration. In contrast, the seated audience members in Image 23 are consulting their programmes and are portrayed as listening in earnest. The 'Silence' sign matches notes on the programme requesting the audience to be quiet during performances, suggesting an audience who may not have had a lot of previous experience at a serious classical music concert, or who were used to treating it as a social occasion. This is not just a reference to the lower class, as it was common throughout the nineteenth century for audience members in the West End to arrive late, leave early, and talk through the performances.

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<sup>334</sup> Bartley, *Far from the Fashionable Crowd*, 116.

<sup>335</sup> SPES/7/1/15: South Place Sunday Popular Concert Committee Annual Reports (SPSPC): 1922 - 23.

<sup>336</sup> *Daily Graphic*, 12 December 1898. Images reproduced in Meadmore, *The Story of a Thousand Concerts*, insert between 40 and 41.

<sup>337</sup> The violinist in Image 22 looks very similar to photos of Jessie Grimson, but there is no way to confirm if this is correct.



*The Daily Graphic*, 12 December 1898.

Image 19 - Late Comers



Image 20 - The Front Row

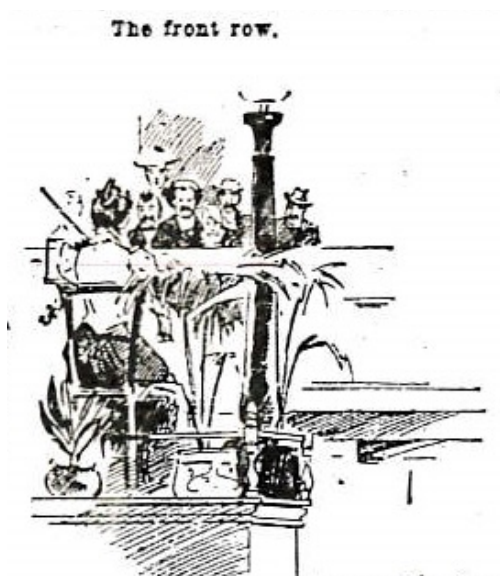


Image 21 - Admission Free



Image 22 - One of the performers.



7 23 One of the performers.

Image 23 - Enthusiasts



The concerts were popular among performers as well as audiences. In Walthew's account of the concerts, he wrote: 'artists often say that... they would rather perform at South Place than anywhere else'.<sup>338</sup> Whilst this would have been an extremely biased opinion, the minute books show that the committee were often turning away singers from auditioning as they already had a list of singers that was too long. Some musicians were selected from the more informal events held at South Place, such as

<sup>338</sup> Walthew, R. "South Place Concerts," 438. In Cobbett, Walter Willson. *Cobbett's Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music: Volume 1 & II*. Reprint by Colin Mason, London: Oxford University Press, 1963.

the dances and soirées, which would have provided members opportunities to perform in a more formal setting and gain more experience as professional musicians.<sup>339</sup> Many of the performers enjoyed the venue so much that they offered to give future performances for a lower fee or even for free. This is possibly because the audience were trained to become an audience of the ‘unworldly, enthusiastic and healthily critical kind that appeals precisely to the musicians most devoted to their art’, as they were described by Walthew.<sup>340</sup> A letter from Evelyn Suart returning her fee confirms this, as she writes: ‘It is always enjoyable to me to work for South Place, where such ideal conditions are reached’.<sup>341</sup> As Bartley infers, some performers may have been aware of South Place’s financial position, and seen it instead as a valuable platform to exhibit their talents in order to secure future work as performers or teachers. Others may have sympathised with the goals of the ethical movement, or the philanthropic aim of the concerts.

## 5.7 The Effect of the War

Whilst World War Two affected South Place badly enough that the concerts were suspended for the first and only time in its history, the Society managed to continue the concerts throughout the entire period of World War One. Other series were not so fortunate. For example, during the 1915/16 season the PCS had to dramatically decrease the number of their concerts to sixteen. As the war went on, the call to arms affected the musicians available to perform as well as a sizeable amount of their audience and subsequently the PCS committee decided to cease operations until the war was over.<sup>342</sup>

Instead, the South Place concerts in some ways flourished between 1914 and 1918. The 29<sup>th</sup> season (1914 – 15) was even extended by five concerts as the Committee for Music in War Time offered extra financial backing for their efforts.<sup>343</sup> During this period there was a noticeable rise in composers programmed from allied countries, as well as national concerts such as the Italian, Russian and French concerts along with

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<sup>339</sup> SPES/7/1/5: Minutes of the Concert Committee of South Place Ethical Society, 1906 – 1934.

<sup>340</sup> *The Guardian*, 21 February 1927 in Walthew, R. “South Place Concerts,” 437.

<sup>341</sup> Hawkins, *The Story of Two Thousand Concerts*, 16.

<sup>342</sup> Bartley, *Far from the Fashionable Crowd*, 80.

<sup>343</sup> SPES/7/1/14: South Place Sunday Popular Concert Committee Annual Reports (SPSPC): 1914 - 5.



the continuation of the British concerts and numerous premieres.<sup>344</sup> Most noticeably was the rise in Belgian music, largely influenced by the significant number of Belgian refugees who came to London during this period. In the 29<sup>th</sup> season Clements organised two Belgian music concerts where he engaged Belgian musicians to play and the substantial £44 14s 8d profits were donated to the War Refugees' Committee and the Commission for Relief in Belgium. It was during this time that Jongen became a regular performer at the concerts. From the start of the war the committee also aimed to show a 'broad-minded outlook' by making the first concert of the season a Schubert evening.<sup>345</sup>

Initially the only trouble caused appears to have been the debate over whether to continue booking a German Bechstein piano for the following concerts. A letter was received from Steinway in an attempt to get the South Place committee to swap to their American brand, rather than continuing with the German firm. Concerned about the extra cost (typical of the committee), they decided to stick with the German Bechstein 'subject to the omission of the name from the side of the instrument & from the programmes & any printed matter', making any association to the German company invisible to the audience.<sup>346</sup> There was also a discussion over whether songs should any longer be performed in German, but the Schubert concert and many subsequent occasions show that this idea was dismissed early on. For some time, after the fright of the Zeppelin raids, the concerts were also moved to an earlier time in the afternoon, but this was also reversed as soon as possible.<sup>347</sup> Bartley wrote that the war brought the end of the South Place Orchestral Society, however it actually just caused a break in their activities, and they returned to giving regular performances in the 1920s.<sup>348</sup>

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<sup>344</sup> SPES: Concert programmes. Italian concert: 5<sup>th</sup> concert of the 30<sup>th</sup> season, 31 October 1915. Russian concert: 13<sup>th</sup> concert of the 29<sup>th</sup> season, 3 January 1915. French concert: 15<sup>th</sup> concert of the 29<sup>th</sup> season, 17 January 1915. British concerts: 9<sup>th</sup> concert of the 29<sup>th</sup> season, 29 November 1914; 21<sup>st</sup> concert of the 29<sup>th</sup> season, 28 February 1915.

<sup>345</sup> SPES/7/1/16: South Place Sunday Popular Concert Committee Annual Reports (SPSPC): 1914 - 5.

<sup>346</sup> SPES/7/1/5: Minutes of the Concert Committee of South Place Ethical Society, 1906 - 34.

<sup>347</sup> SPES/7/1/16: South Place Sunday Popular Concert Committee Annual Reports (SPSPC): 1915 - 6.

<sup>348</sup> SPES: Concert programmes. 27<sup>th</sup> concert of the 35<sup>th</sup> season, 24 April 1921; 10<sup>th</sup> concert of the 36<sup>th</sup> season, 4 December 1921; 25<sup>th</sup> concert of the 36<sup>th</sup> season, 26 March 1922; 10<sup>th</sup> concert of the 37<sup>th</sup> season, 3 December 1922; 11<sup>th</sup> concert of the 38<sup>th</sup> season, 16 December 1923; 25<sup>th</sup> concert of the 38<sup>th</sup> season, 30 March 1924; 12<sup>th</sup> concert of the 39<sup>th</sup> season, 21 December 1924; 25<sup>th</sup> concert of the 39<sup>th</sup> season, 29 March 1925; 12<sup>th</sup> concert of the 40<sup>th</sup> season, 20 December 1925; 25<sup>th</sup> concert of the 40<sup>th</sup> season, 28 March 1926; 12<sup>th</sup> concert of the 41<sup>st</sup> season, 19 December 1926;

The conclusion of Meadmore's book offers a unique insight into the running and atmosphere of the concerts during World War One.<sup>349</sup> There are a number of quotations from letters written to South Place from audience members and performers. These highlight the performers' appreciation of the audience at South Place, who continued to respond well to the music, as well as the general warm attitudes of members who were willing to help where possible. For example, William Dring offered to draw some pictures of one of the concerts to be included in the book for no fee. Incidentally, the example in Image 24 shows a few working-class men, but the two women performing on stage make up the majority of women in the room.<sup>350</sup> The most emotional letters are the examples from injured soldiers of World War One and their relatives, who wrote to express the joy that the concerts brought to their life and often sent money in case the war was affecting the concert committee's funds. One letter from a woman whose husband was a prisoner of war in Germany said that he would like to have known what was 'happening' at South Place. Another was to say thank you to the Society for 'many delightful evenings of sound and sweet airs'.<sup>351</sup> A letter from a woman whose husband was seriously ill reads:

... with what joy he used to look forward to your concerts, and how he enjoyed them, he used to say they made life worth living, and I don't think he has missed one of them. I hope you will excuse me for writing to you, but I felt I must, he always used to speak so kindly about you that you seem a friend of his.<sup>352</sup>

It must be a rare thing for a concert promoter to receive such a touching letter that really demonstrates the role the concerts played in the lives of its audience members. Moreover, the letter indicates that at times of sadness, the concerts may have held a further purpose of comfort to friends and relatives of those who attended regularly, through the strong bonds that were created in that setting.

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<sup>349</sup> Meadmore, *The Story of a Thousand Concerts*, 37 – 40.

<sup>350</sup> Ibid., 40. See Image 24 below.

<sup>351</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>352</sup> Ibid., 39.

The annual reports also changed during these years, becoming more descriptive and thus providing a unique insight into how London concerts were reacting to the war. At the outbreak of war, the committee had doubts over whether the concerts 'should' be continued, not whether they 'could', suggesting it was more of a moral quandary for them as to whether it was still suitable to host musical evenings during a time of international crisis. However, it was decided that the concerts could offer relief from the 'strenuous duties of everyday life' and a way of providing support in their own way.<sup>353</sup> This outlook continued throughout the war, although it became tougher every year. The second year saw a drop in audience numbers and greater difficulty hiring performers, but there was a continued effort to include music by German composers, albeit mostly historical rather than contemporary. In the annual report of the third season of the war years, the writer reflects on the changes that have occurred since the war, noting the toll it has taken on both performers and audience:

Gone are many familiar faces, but fresh ones have replaced them. Somehow folk from all classes of society have found their way to this home of the sublime art, situated in one of the busiest parts of the city, where they find in music a solace, one might almost say a drug, which for a few brief hours, will lull them into forgetfulness of this horrible world war. Upstairs in the gallery the pale-faced tailor from the East End, who works all the week in a stuffy little room somewhere in Whitechapel, sits next to a couple of bronzed Colonial fighters who are on short leave from a front line trench somewhere in France. Nurses and munition workers, red-tabbed Staff Officers and able-bodied seamen, and just ordinary civilians, sit side by side.<sup>354</sup>

This is one of the most descriptive passages in any of the annual reports, which are usually much more focused on recounting the numerous highlights of the season. The war years clearly shifted the perspective of the committee and forced them to analyse the influence of the concerts on a broader scale, with a much deeper consideration for the social impact of the concerts over the purely musical and educational benefits that

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<sup>353</sup> SPES/7/1/16: South Place Sunday Popular Concert Committee Annual Reports (SPSPC): 1914 - 5.

<sup>354</sup> SPES/7/1/16: South Place Sunday Popular Concert Committee Annual Reports (SPSPC): 1916 - 7.

they provided. The descriptions of their audience members are a rare feature in the reports. Whether they are factually correct or not, it reveals the perspective the committee had behind the concerts during the war. References to the different roles that people had during the war – from soldier to civilian – give a sense of the audience being a place of equality and solidarity. The emphasis on distinctions of class and nationality suggests that the committee saw the communal activity of listening to music as a way of connecting people from different walks of life during a divisive time, supported by their efforts to be musically inclusive. The following report from 1918 keeps a similar tone. There is a note of the rise in khaki among the audience and now on the platform, and a note is made of the incongruity of a man dressed in his war uniform playing sweet music – ‘surely the most peaceful of all the Arts’.<sup>355</sup> The audience are also described as being ‘as cosmopolitan as ever’ yet bonded by the love of ‘good’ music. Such statements about the peaceful and good nature of music implies that despite the intense moral questions that must have been triggered by the war, there was still a sense of chamber music having intrinsic elevating and moral value. In this season the committee continued their fundraising, when the String Quartet of the 31<sup>st</sup> Middlesex Regiment gave a concert in aid of the British Red Cross, raising £15/1/6.<sup>356</sup>

It is during the later years of the war that the subject of men and women musicians is raised for the first time in a way that distinguishes them from each other. As may be expected, the number of women involved in the concerts rose significantly during the war. There were more women performing regularly and there was a dramatic increase in the number of women on the committee, which was sustained in later years. In the opening few paragraphs of the 1918 report, the author notes that the war has made it increasingly difficult to secure the services of male executants and vocalists, and the fact that the committee had been able to maintain the customary proportion was a valuable testimony to the concerts.<sup>357</sup> This statement is not quite true. During this season, there was roughly an equal split between male and female performers and vocalists, but this was absolutely not always the case. In most previous years, although

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<sup>355</sup> SPES/7/1/16: South Place Sunday Popular Concert Committee Annual Reports (SPSPC): 1917 – 8.

<sup>356</sup> Ibid.

<sup>357</sup> Ibid.

there was a roughly equal balance between male and female vocalists, there was always a substantially higher proportion of male instrumentalists. So although South Place gave opportunities to women that may not have been as easy to acquire elsewhere, this was clearly not done without maintaining a certain proportion of male performers. From a more positive point of view, it suggests that the committee were aware of the gender balance presented at their concerts, and the fact that this was higher than in many other venues shows an awareness of the inclusion of women musicians that was not simply a by-product of the high proportion of women in the Ethical Society, or the fact that they were more likely to perform for free.

On describing the occasion of the 750<sup>th</sup> concert that took place on 6 January 1918, the annual report stated: 'Our lady friends have acquitted themselves with their wonted efficiency, and rendered splendid service throughout the season. Among these may be specially mentioned Miss Jessie Grimson, Mrs Ethel Hobday, Miss Myra Hess and the Misses Bentwich...'.<sup>358</sup> This is followed by an appreciation of the talents displayed by the 'lady vocalists'. It was fairly common in the annual reports for the 'ladies' to be commented on separately from the men, as a sort of sub-category. This did not usually include all of the women, just those who they clearly felt deserved a special mention but had not already been written about in detail. It is sometimes written as if some women with an especially high ability or reputation somehow superseded the category of 'the ladies'. Although this does not appear to be intentionally dismissive or discriminatory, it does present the women as an 'other' at a time when women were equally as present as men. However, in this case, it is likely that the separation was mentioned because the concert happened towards the end of World War One. Whereas previous 'special' concerts were usually dominated by men, in this case, when there were fewer men available to participate, the larger presence of women musicians was obviously noticeable. As the following chapter will show, the distinction made between the male and female musicians was in many ways overlooked. However, in the absence of greater numbers of men involved in the concerts during the context of war, South Place occasionally let more misogynistic attitudes slip through in places that had not previously been apparent. In a lengthy introduction to the Opus 1 concert that took place on 4 November 1917, 'W.G' intended to arouse

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<sup>358</sup> Ibid.

interest within the audience in the early works of great composers. Given that this thesis is arguing that the South Place concerts were one of the most successful concerts in London with regards to championing women composers, his words are troublesome:

There are few pages in a biography more fascinating than those which tell of the early days of a great man. The supreme interest of tracing the advent, the growth and the flowering of his special gift appeals to all in whom the love of art is found... One would like to think that the genius is a modest man. The real genius is and must be so; modesty, humility, eagerness to learn and power to endure are essentials of his nature.<sup>359</sup>

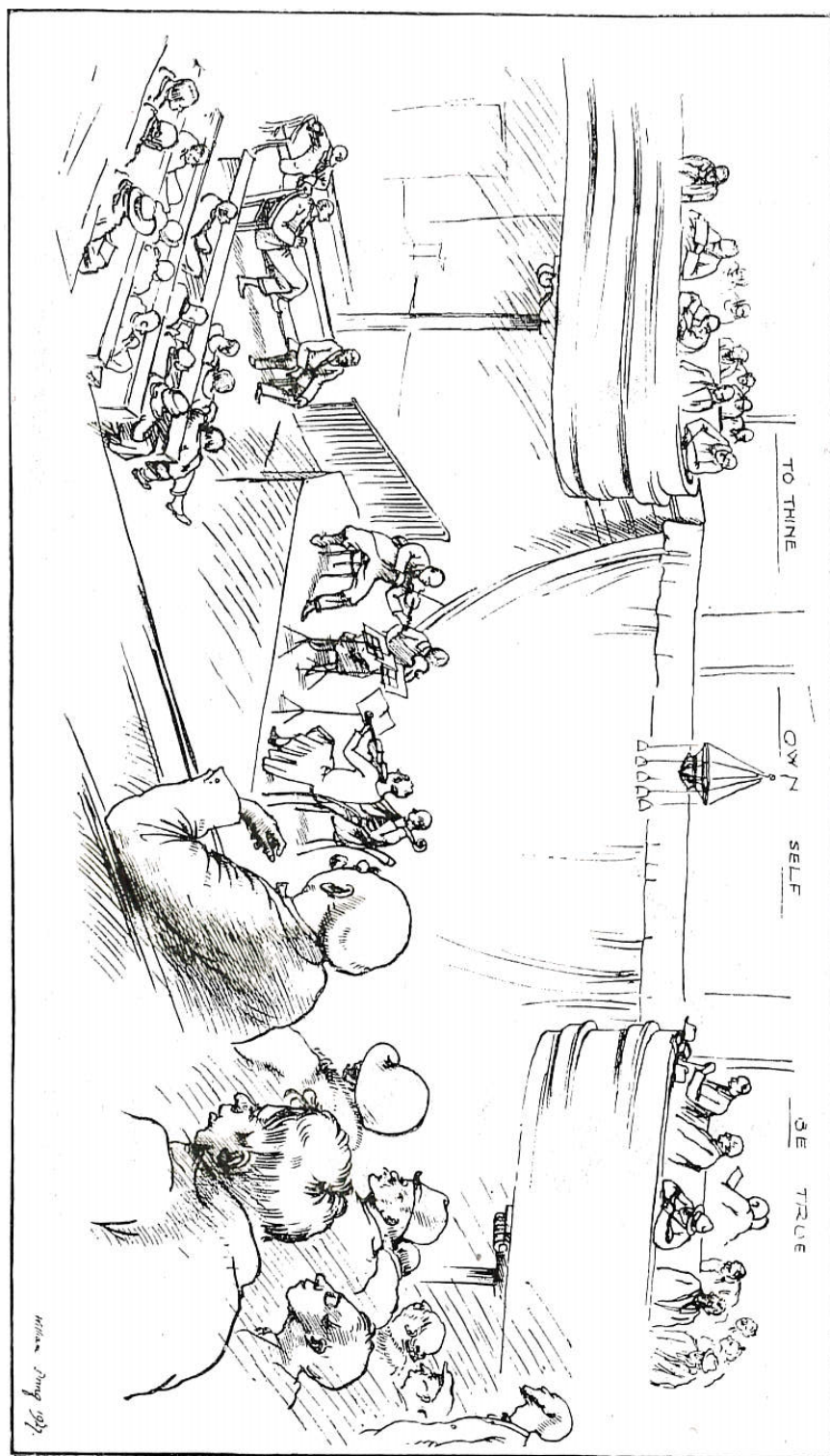
The concert, performed in part by Jessie Grimson and Amy Grimson, predictably only featured works by male composers. Diversity was created in the concert through the disparity between the eminence of the composers (the first work in the concert was by Beethoven, and the last by James Friskin). The focus on 'great men' in the programme notes and the musical content seems to be somewhat compensating for the tragedies occurring around the globe, particularly to men at the front line, and simultaneously upholding the narrative of the male hero that was permeating war propaganda at the time. Whether it was purposeful, or accidental neglect, women are completely dismissed in this programme as potential 'great' composers, or indeed, 'geniuses'. Whilst this concert and the message it portrayed should not be overlooked, it is a rare example of such blatant patriarchal language in the South Place concert programmes or even their more private administrative writing. Contrastingly, in 1915 a special concert of women composers was organised in acknowledgement of the important work that women were contributing during this difficult time.<sup>360</sup> Ironically, after this concert there was a considerable drop in the number of women composers that featured in the South Place concerts for many years. However, the following chapter will use this concert as a focus from which to explore the women who performed and were programmed during the first 1000 concerts.

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<sup>359</sup> SPES: Concert Programme. 5<sup>th</sup> concert of the 32<sup>nd</sup> season, 4 November 1917.

<sup>360</sup> SPES: Concert programme. 16<sup>th</sup> concert of the 29<sup>th</sup> season, 24 January 1915.

Image 24 - South Place Concert scene by William Dring.<sup>361</sup>



<sup>361</sup> Meadmore, *The Story of a Thousand Concerts*, 40.



*En P. 50.* *088* *Repeat 7.6*

## SOUTH PLACE SUNDAY POPULAR CONCERTS.

16th CONCERT of the Twenty-Ninth Season (674th Concert), SUNDAY, JAN. 24th, 1915, at 7 p.m. (Doors 6.30).

### CONCERT OF COMPOSITIONS BY WOMEN COMPOSERS.

1. PHANTASY TRIO IN D MINOR ("Como Bells") for Pianoforte, Violin, and Violoncello ... *Edith Sweepestone.*  
(First Public Performance)  
Molto Moderato—Andante—Agitato—Lento—Allegretto gioioso—Andante—Molto Moderato—Allegro.

NOTE BY THE COMPOSER.—On the banks of Como, I climbed a little hill so overgrown with trees, that the rest of the world was shut out. Suddenly, the intense stillness of the leafy twilight was broken by the joyous sound of bells ringing from a campanile far up the mountain side. Then and there I jotted down on the fly-leaf of Baedeker the little bell-tune which appears in the latter part of this Fantasy, at the section marked Allegretto gioioso.

THE CHAPLIN TRIO: Miss NELLIE CHAPLIN, Miss KATE CHAPLIN, AND Miss MABEL CHAPLIN.

2. SONGS—(a) "When Myra Sings," *A.L.* (b) "How do I love thee?" *M.V. White.* (c) "Unless," *Emily Josephine Troup.*  
Miss MARGARET WILD. (c) UNLESS.

(a) WHEN MYRA SINGS.  
When Myra sings we seek the enchanting sound,  
And bless the notes that do so sweetly wound;  
What music needs must dwell upon that tongue,  
Whose speech is tuneful as another's song.  
Such harmony! such wit! a face so fair!  
So many pointed arrows who can bear?  
The slave that from her wit and beauty flies,  
If he but hear that Syren's voice he dies!  
*Lord Landsdowne (1667-1735).*

(b) HOW DO I LOVE THEE?  
How do I love thee?  
Let me count the ways:  
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height  
My soul can reach—  
I love thee purely,  
I love thee to the level  
Of every day's most quiet need.  
I love thee with the breath of all my life,  
And if God choose  
I shall but love thee better after death.  
*Elizabeth Barrett Browning.*

(c) UNLESS.  
Unless you can feel when the song is done  
No other is soft in the rhythm;  
Unless you can feel, when left by one,  
That all men else go with him;  
Unless you can feel, when unpraised by his breath  
That your beauty itself wants proving;  
Unless you can swear for life, for death,  
Oh! fear to call it loving.  
Unless you can muse in a crowd all day  
On the absent face that fixed you;  
Unless you can love as the angels may,  
With the breadth of Heav'n betwixt you;  
Unless you can dream that his faith is fast  
Thro' behaving and unbehaving;  
Unless you can die when the dream is past,  
Oh! never call it loving. *E. Barrett Browning*

3. SONGS ... (a) "O Years and Age, Farewell" ... *Evelyn Burrowes.*  
(b) "I sometimes think" ("In a Persian Garden") ... *Liza Lehmann.*  
(c) "Last Year" and (d) "The Bonny Curl" ... *Maude Valérie White.*  
Miss DOROTHEA CROMPTON.

(a) O, YEARS AND AGE, FAREWELL.  
O, Years and Age, farewell;  
Behold I go, where I do know  
Infinity to dwell;  
And these, mine eyes,  
Shall see all times how they are lost  
In the sea of vast eternity,  
Where never moon shall sway the stars,  
But she and night shall be drowned  
In one endless day. *Herrick.*

(b) I SOMETIMES THINK.  
Ah, not a drop that from our Cups we throw  
For Earth to drink of, but may steal below.  
To quench the fire of Anguish in some Eye  
There hidden, far beneath, and long ago.  
I sometimes think that never blows so red  
The Rose as where some buried Caesar bled.  
That ev'ry Hyacinth the Garden wears  
Dropt in her lap from some once lovely head.

(c) LAST YEAR.  
The spring, my dear,  
Is no longer spring.  
Does the blackbird sing  
What he sang last year?  
Are the skies the old  
Immemorial blue?  
Or am I, or are you,  
Grown cold?  
Though life be change,  
It is hard to bear  
When the old sweet air  
Sounds forced and strange.

(d) THE BONNY CURL.  
I hae a curl, a bright brown curl,  
A bonny, bonny curl o' hair;  
And close to my heart it nestles warm,  
But its brithers dinna ken it's there.  
I stole my curl, my silk soft curl,  
My bonny, bonny curl o' hair;  
And a' the night it sleeps upon my breast,  
But its owner does na ken it's there.  
O bright, bright curl, O lovely, lovely curl,  
O curl of my bonny, bonny dear,  
I wish that again ye were shining on his head,  
But I wish that his head were here.  
*Amélie Rives.*

4. SONATA IN D MINOR, Op. 16, for Pianoforte and Violin ... *Agnes Zimmermann.*  
(First time at these Concerts)  
I. Allegro. II. Scherzo: Allegro grazioso. III. Andante tranquillo. IV. Finale: Allegro vivace.  
Miss NELLIE CHAPLIN AND Miss KATE CHAPLIN.

5. VOCAL DUET ... "Maying" ... *Alice Mary Smith.*  
Miss MARGARET WILD AND Miss DOROTHEA CROMPTON.

Oh! that we two were maying,  
Down the stream of the soft Spring breeze,  
Like children with violets playing,  
In the shade of the whispering trees.

Oh! that we two sat dreaming,  
On the sward of some sheep-trimmed down,  
Watching the white mist streaming,  
O'er river and mead and town. *Charles Kingsley.*

6. SONGS ... *Announcement by Mrs. C. J. Hall, of Halifax, Canada, in connection with the collection for the Red Cross.*  
(a) "Le Ruban Rose" ... *Augusta Holmès.*  
(b) "Lovers in the Lane" ... *Liza Lehmann.* (c) "The Throstle" ... *Agnes Lambert.*  
Miss MARGARET WILD.

(a) LE RUBAN ROSE.  
Celui que j'aime est si mignon  
Que les femmes en sont marries  
Il n'a ni chasses ni prairies;  
Pas même le moindre pignon!  
Il est de très bonne noblesse  
Et plus brave que ses aïeux—  
Il est jaloux, un rien le blesse,  
Ses étoiles, ce sont mes yeux.  
Et puis, c'est un charmant visage  
Fier et tendre, bien à mon gré.  
Il ressemble à l'amour poudré!  
C'est pourquoi j'en ai fait mon page

J'étais en grand habit de cour,  
Fard et mouches, satins, dentelles;  
Celui pour qui je me fais belle  
A mes genoux parlait d'amour.  
Et mon collier de ruban rose,  
Je ne sais comment—s'envola!  
Il fut cueilli comme une Rose  
Par le Prince qui passait là!  
"Voici votre ruban, Madame,  
Reprenez-le contre un baiser!  
Gardez-vous bien de refuser!  
En ce cas votre amant rend l'âme."

Mon-jeune ami, plein de fureur,  
Dit: "Madame n'est point en cause!  
Il m'appartient, ce ruban rose,  
Et je vous tuerai, Monseigneur."  
Et je le vis au clair de lune,  
Si joli pendant le combat.  
Qu'il fut choisi par la Fortune  
Pour que le Prince succombât.  
"Il faut me consoler, Marquise,"  
Dit mon page, triste à demi;  
"J'ai tué mon meilleur ami!"  
C'est pourquoi je lui fus exquise!

[Please wait till Song is finished before turning Programme.]



## 6.1 Key comparisons: women composers at South Place and beyond

A significant amount of instrumental music composed by women was programmed at South Place in the first 1000 concerts, considering the fact that throughout Europe it was an extremely male-dominated field. This chapter will begin by presenting my research on the concert programmes of other contemporaneous chamber music concerts in London, showing how the South Place Sunday Popular Concerts compare in terms of their inclusion of women composers in their programmes. This will be followed by a more in depth look at the women composers and performers who featured in the concerts, particularly through the lens of the 1915 concert of compositions by women (see Image 25). Unlike Grimson, Swepstone and Troup, some of these women have already been subject to rigorous academic research, by scholars who will be referenced throughout the chapter. The significance of their inclusion in this chapter is that there will be a concentration on their music at the South Place concerts and how they fit in with the values of the Ethical Society. As an introduction to this topic, Table 4 below shows all of the instrumental chamber music composed by women that was performed at the South Place concerts between 1887 and 1927.<sup>363</sup> The composers and works will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

Table 4 - Instrumental chamber works by women composers at the South Place Concerts, 1887 - 1927.<sup>364</sup>

Composer	Work	Number of performances	Performer/s	Date of performances
Agathe Backer-Grondahl	<i>Norwegische Tanz-Caprice</i> (piano solo)	3 (first time encored, played another piece)	Josephine Troup	26/01/1890 07/12/1890 19/12/1897
	<i>Au Bal</i> (piano solo)	1	Josephine Troup (recall)	19/12/1897
	<i>Ballade</i> Op. 36 (piano solo)	1	Fridtjof Backer Grondahl (4	06/02/1921

<sup>363</sup> Songs by women composers that were programmed at South Place have in some instances been listed in other areas of the thesis and a full list of song composers in the programmes can be found in section 6.2. There were many more songs than instrumental works by women, and a full table of songs by women composers may have been included if the full set of South Place concert programmes had been available earlier on in the research. There is scope for this to be done in the future. This table of instrumental works highlights some of the more unusual contributions by women.

<sup>364</sup> All information in the table comes from SPES: Concert programmes, 1887 – 1927.

			recalls)	
	<i>Etude de Concert</i> Op. 58, No. 2 (piano solo)	1	Fridtjof Backer Grondahl	06/02/1921
Cécile Chaminade	<i>Arlequine</i> (piano solo)	1	Alfred Gallrein	26/11/1893
	<i>Etude de Concert 'Automne'</i> (piano solo)	1	Archibald Evans	17/11/1895
	Piano Trio in A Minor (violin, piano, cello)	1	The Chaplin Trio (Nellie Chaplin, Kate Chaplin, Mabel Chaplin)	24/01/1915
Rebecca Clarke	<i>Lullaby</i> (duet for violin and cello)	1	Margery Bentwich and Thelma Bentwich	09/03/1918
Amy Grimson	<i>Canzona</i> (cello solo)	1	Amy Grimson	22/03/1896
Jane Joseph	String Quartet in A Minor	1	The Winifred Smith String Quartet	17/12/1922
Poldowski	<i>The Bouncing Ball from Caledonian Market</i> (piano solo)	1	Gordon Bryan	08/11/1925
Kate Ralph	Air with Variations in F $\sharp$ minor (piano solo)	2	Kate Ralph (first time received recall)	04/01/1891 21/10/1894
	'Abendlied' and 'Tarantella' (violin solos)	1 (encored, played Brahms)	Gerald Walenn and Kate Ralph	22/03/1891
	'Abendlied' and 'Polacca' (cello solos)	1	Herbert Walenn	01/10/1893
	<i>Gallop</i> (piano solo)	1 (as an encore)	Kate Ralph	18/02/1894
Ethel Smyth	Quartet in E Minor (Two violins, viola and cello)	1	Boris Pecker, Dorothy Churton, Gertrud Hopkins, Edith Churton	08/03/1924
Freda Swain	Duets for Violin and Cello 'Chanson Pastorale' and 'Danse Barbare'	1 (premiere)	Lena Kontorovitch, Theodor Otscharkoff	11/10/1925
	<i>West Wind</i> (piano solo)	1 (premiere)	Freda Swain	11/10/1925
Edith Swebstone	<i>Lament</i> (violin solo)	1	John Saunders	04/02/1900
	<i>Spectral Hunt</i> (piano solo)	1	Edith Swebstone	04/12/1900
Swebstone (continued)	Piano Quintet E Minor (piano, two violins, viola	3 (first time recall with	R. Walthew, J. Saunders, C.	10/02/1907

	and cello)	composer)	Woodhouse, E. Yonge, C. Crabbe R. Walthew, J. Saunders, H. Parsons, E. Yonge, C. Crabbe Emily Williams and The Grimson Quartet (J. Grimson, C. Woodhouse, E. Tomlinson, P. Parker)	21/11/1909  18/02/1917
	Quintet in D (horn, two violins, viola and cello)	1	A. Borsdorf, John Saunders, Alfred J. Clements, Ernest Yonge and William C. Hann	10/03/1901
	Quintet in E $\flat$ (piano, flute, clarinet, bassoon and horn)	1	Edith Sweepstone, Frederic Griffith, Julian Egerton, T. Wotton and A. Borsdorf	18/12/1898
	<i>Lyric Cycle</i> for string quartet	1 (first time at these concerts, recall with composer)	The Schwiller Quartet (Isidore Schwiller, Thomas Peatfield, Ernest Yonge, Jean Schwiller)	26/03/1911
	<i>Phantasy Trio in D Minor "Como Bells"</i> (piano, violin and cello)	1 (premiere)	The Chaplin Trio (Nellie Chaplin, Kate Chaplin, Mabel Chaplin)	24/01/1915
	Trio in C Minor (piano, oboe and horn)	1	Evelyn Suart, W. M. Malsch and A. Borsdorf (recall)	17/12/1905
Sweepstone (continued)	Trio in A Minor (piano, violin and cello)	1	The Dulcken Trio (Edie Reynolds, Kate Ould and Marie Dulcken)	17/11/1901

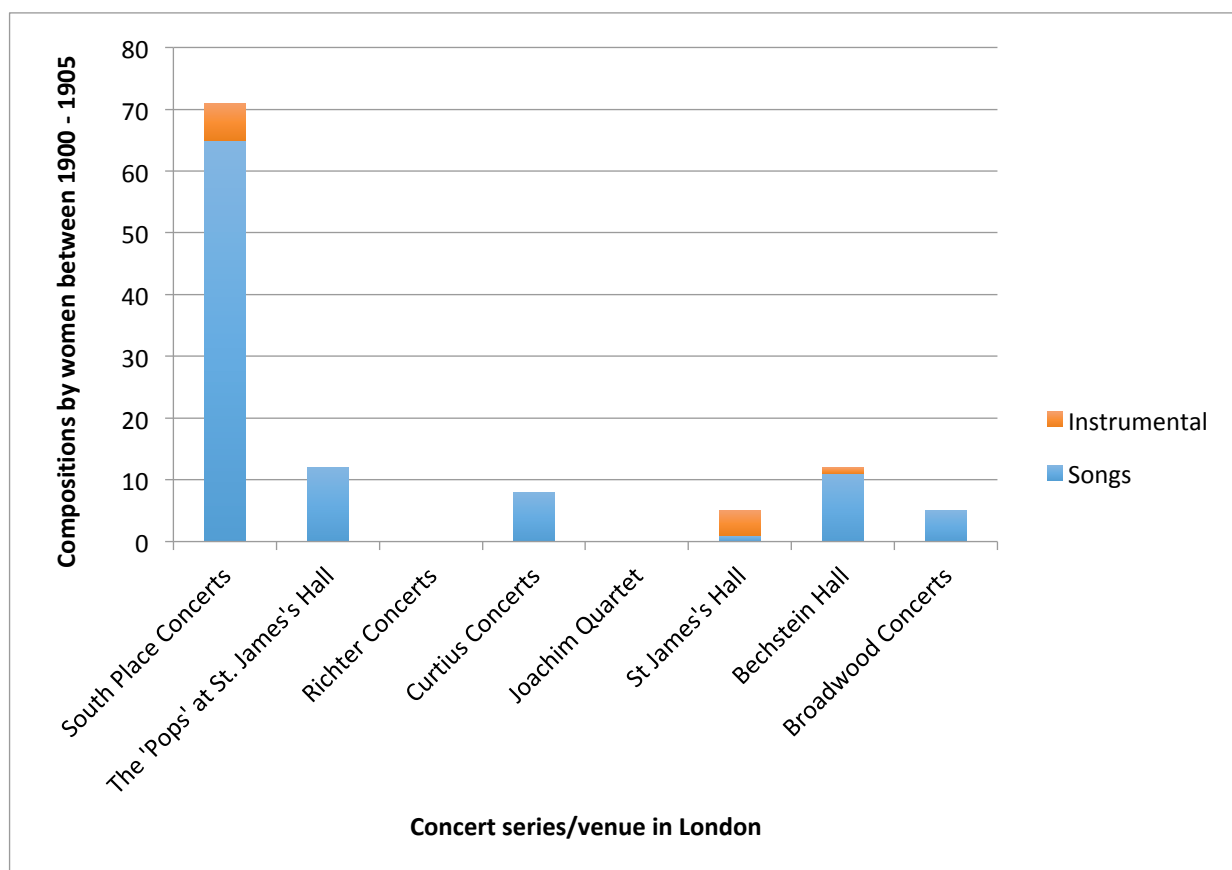
	Quintet in F Minor (piano, two violins, viola and cello)	1	Edith Swebstone, John Saunders, Archibald Evans, Thomas Batty, Wm. C. Hann	21/02/1897  21/11/1909
	<i>Six Miniatures for Viola - Pansies</i>	1	E. Yonge	02/04/1905
	Quartet in A Minor (piano, violin, viola and cello)	2	R. Walthew, J. Saunders, H. W. Warner, C. Crabbe R. Walthew, C. Woodhouse, E. Yonge, Phyliss Hasluck	01/12/1912  13/02/1921
Josephine Troup	<i>Sketches for Violin and Pianoforte</i> 'Barcarolle', 'Cradle Song' and 'Allegro Vivace'	1 (encored, played Allegro again)	Winifred Robinson and Josephine Troup	15/02/1891
	<i>Romance</i> for String Quartet	2	Wessley String Quartet (Hans Wessley, Spencer Dyke, Ernest Tomlinson, B. Patterson Parker) John Saunders, Charles Woodhouse, Ernest Yonge, Charles A. Crabbe	18/11/1906  15/12/1912
	<i>Kleines Wiegenlied</i> (violin solo)	3 (second time as encore after 4 recalls)	John Saunders (first time 3 recalls)	20/12/1891 30/10/1910 03/03/1912
Alice Verne-Bredt	<i>Phantasie Trio in C Minor</i> (piano, violin and cello)	1	Mathilde Verne, J. Saunders, C. Crabbe	30/10/1910
Agnes Zimmermann	Sonata in D Minor, Op. 16 (piano and violin)	1	Nellie Chaplin, Kate Chaplin	24/01/1915

Having analysed many other chamber music programmes from the period, it is clear that South Place was part of a minority who consistently included women's instrumental music in their programmes. For this research, twelve chamber music series and concert venues were examined for appearances of women composers in the programmes. For the fairest comparisons, only other London-based chamber music concerts from the period have been used as a preliminary comparison to the South Place Sunday Popular Concerts. A five-year period from 1900 to 1905 has been included in the graph. Other years were reviewed thoroughly and in many cases showed similar results. Concert programmes were available for the Monday and Saturday Popular Concerts, the Richter concerts, the Curtius Concert Club, the Joachim Classical Concerts, the Broadwood Concerts, and for other concerts that took place at Bechstein, Aeolian and St James's Halls. These are all comparable to the South Place concerts, in the sense that they were all fairly prominent hosts of chamber music in the early twentieth century. Alan Bartley's doctoral thesis has provided the data for the suburban concerts in Hampstead, Woodford, Suburbiton and by People's Concert Society concerts.<sup>365</sup> These concerts are linked to South Place in different ways, in the sense that their purpose was more to offer opportunities for members of that community to hear chamber music. The People's Concert Society, who set up a number of concert series around London including at South Place, are a particularly revealing comparison, as it demonstrates how in the break away from the PCS, South Place developed their own specific direction in terms of programming. Furthermore, both committees had explicit aims of providing chamber music at affordable costs, primarily so that it was accessible to the lower classes, offering an alternative to the relatively expensive ticket prices for concerts in the West End. The tables in Appendix 2 show the information broken down, but the bar graph in Image 26 provides a clearer visual representation of the findings.

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<sup>365</sup> His appendices provide lists of composers, works and number of occurrences for each piece at each concert. Bartley, Alan. "Chamber concerts in suburban London, 1895 – 1915: aspects of repertoire, performance and reception." PhD diss., Oxford Brookes University: 2004.

Image 26 - Graph showing the number of women composers featured in London chamber concerts.<sup>366</sup>



Among the comparisons, it is extremely clear that the SPSPC committee did succeed in including more women composers than their contemporaries. Nowhere in the committee minute books is it stated that this was a conscious aim, however, the prominence of feminist thought at the Society and the 1915 Concert of Women Composers shows that there was an awareness and appreciation of women composers by the organisers. The number of songs far exceeds the number of instrumental compositions, which reflects common attitudes of the time, that women were more suited to writing songs and simple music for solo instruments and small chamber ensembles, mainly including strings and piano. However, the vast gap between the number of songs by women composers in the SPSPC programmes in this ten-year

<sup>366</sup> SPES: Concert programmes, 1900 – 1905; BL: Music Collections: d.480. Monday Popular Concerts – Saturday Popular Concerts. Programme and words, 1859 – 1904; BL: Music Collections: d.481. Richter Concerts held at St. James's Hall, 1879 – 1904; RCM: "London: Bechstein Hall (1901 – 1914)."; RCM: "London: Bechstein Hall (1901 – 1914)."; RCM: "London: St. James's Hall (1895 – 1904)."; RCM: "London: Bechstein Hall (1901 – 1914)."; RCM: "London: St. James's Hall (1895 – 1904)."; RCM: "London: Aeolian Hall (1904 – 1944)."; Bartley, Alan. "Chamber concerts in suburban London, 1895 – 1915: aspects of repertoire, performance and reception" (PhD diss., Oxford Brookes University, 2004).

period (65) compared to the second highest result at the Monday and Saturday Popular Concerts (12), indicates a much more open embrace of this genre of composition by women than at other venues. Compositions of purely instrumental works, which were much rarer for women to write and have performed prior to the twentieth century, were minimal in comparison to songs, even at South Place.<sup>367</sup> Nevertheless, the six programmed at South Place during this decade, was a figure only nearly matched by concerts at St James's Hall (not including other series that were hosted there such as the Joachim and Broadwood concerts, which have been analysed separately). It is interesting to note, however, that out of the four instrumental pieces programmed at St James's, three of them were part of the last ever concert to be hosted at the hall in 1904 before it was demolished shortly afterwards. Many of the other concerts analysed contained no instrumental concerts by women at all. Hence, it is clear that even though South Place programmed significantly more male composers than female, the proportions were actually strikingly high for the context of the time.

A future study could take into account a wider range of concerts, including orchestral and vocal concerts, and look at the data over a wider time span. Due to constraints on time and the availability of material, this was not possible for this thesis. However the research that has been achieved through examining these London chamber concerts provides a clear indication of how the bigger picture would look. Other concerts that may have rivalled South Place in terms of representing women composers may have included the Musical Artists' Society that took place at St Martin's Hall, where many compositions by British composers were performed, but not much remains of their programmes.<sup>368</sup> The London Ballad Concerts also included many compositions by women, which is unsurprising considering the nature of the music that made up the programmes. Another unique setting in which women composers were brought to the public's attention was at Women's Exhibitions. Notably, in 1885, Jane Jackson Roeckel organised a special concert of piano works composed by women to take place during the Bristol Exhibition of Women's Industries. Being the first of its kind, the concert was met with an unusual amount of high praise, given the tendency for reviews of women's music at the time to be openly derogatory or somewhat condescending.

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<sup>367</sup> Seddon, *British Women Composers and Instrumental Chamber Music*, 42.

<sup>368</sup> Fuller, "Women composers during the British Musical Renaissance 1880 – 1918.", 96 – 7.

Drawing on a wide range of scholarship outside of musicology, alongside contemporary reviews of the concert, Sarah Kirby argued convincingly that the location and nature of the exhibition was crucial to allowing the women's music to be judged on their own merit, instead of in comparison to the more dominant circle of male composers.<sup>369</sup> A similar argument can be made for South Place; its status as an ethical society as well as a venue of 'high-class' musical entertainment created a space for women of the Society to situate themselves as professional musicians.

In terms of orchestral music, which was still a fairly rare form of composition for women composers in this era, both the Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra (led by Sir Dan Godfrey) and Henry Wood's orchestra have been noted as consistently programming women composers.<sup>370</sup> At Bournemouth, Edith Swepstone was the most regularly programmed female composer between 1887 and 1927. Other works by women included Ethel Barns (Violin Concerto, November 1904), Ina Boyle (Rhapsody *The Magic Harp*, December, 1920), Lilian Elkington (Tone-Poem, *Out of the Mist*, December, 1922), and more by Alexis Gunning, Elizabeth Maconchy and Phyllis Tate. At the Promenade Concerts held in the Queen's Hall and performed by Henry Wood's orchestra, the first work by a female composer to be included was a suite by Cécile Chaminade (1857 – 1944) in 1896, the second year of the concerts. Chaminade was at this time a well-known and liked composer. In America there were Chaminade clubs across the country, Queen Victoria was openly a fan of her work and in later years she became president of the Society of Women Musicians in England. Laura Seddon suggested that it is possible that Chaminade's French nationality gave her added gravitas in the UK, as foreign composers were often seen as being more proficient than their British contemporaries, although this does not appear to have enhanced her popularity at South Place above other women composers.<sup>371</sup> After the appearance of Chaminade's suite, it took a while before women's compositions were more regularly

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<sup>369</sup> Kirby, Sarah, "Women Composers and the Bristol Exhibition of Women's Industries" (Paper presented at the Music in Nineteenth-Century Britain Conference, University of Birmingham, 30 June 2017).

<sup>370</sup> Fuller, "Women composers during the British Musical Renaissance 1880 – 1918," 92; Lloyd, Stephen. *Sir Dan Godfrey: Champion of British Composers* (London: Thames Publishing, 1995); Seddon, Laura. "Wood's women: The Henry Wood Proms and the woman composer, 1910 – 20." Proms Conference 2007: British Library, 23 April 2007. Available to listen at the BL: C927/879 BD5.

<sup>371</sup> Seddon, "Wood's women: The Henry Wood Proms and the woman composer, 1910 – 20," 2007. BL: C927/879 BD5.



included in the programmes, but her appearance in the early years of the concerts certainly opened the door for more to be included. The 1920s were the most successful years of the early twentieth century for women composers at the Proms, which forms an interesting contrast to the South Place concerts, where women were programmed less frequently than in previous years.<sup>372</sup> Mostly these numbers were made up from songs and piano pieces, reflecting the normal trend for programming women composers in these years. Liza Lehmann, Maude Valérie White and Teresa Del Riego were among the popular song composers in this series, who also featured regularly in the South Place programmes. Less regular but there nonetheless, were orchestral pieces by women such as Ethel Barns and Poldowski (pseudonym of Régine Wieniawski, 1879 - 1932). An example of this is Poldowski's *Nocturne*, written for a large ensemble of wind instruments. It has not been repeated often, if at all, but the opportunity for a female composer to experiment with writing for such orchestration was both unusual and important progress.<sup>373</sup> Henry Wood, like Alfred Clements and the SPSPC committee, gave women the chance to have music performed that would not usually have been considered saleable or worth publishing. These performance opportunities were essential to encouraging women to write new and challenging music. The existence of music by female composers in well-respected, high profile concerts played by professionals would have done much to raise the status of British women composers, even if there is still some way to go before true equality.

## 6.2 Song Composers of the South Place Concerts

The analysis in this chapter has demonstrated that South Place included more songs by women composers than was the norm, particularly pre-war. In many cases, the songs written by men and women were used as a lighter part of the programme in between lengthy pieces for larger ensembles. Songs generally received the most calls for encores, so were clearly a part of the programme that was enjoyed by the audience. The following section will look at some of the songs and composers that had the greatest presence in the concerts and their reception.

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<sup>372</sup> Elliott, Susan. "Women Composers and the Proms: the first 100 years, 1895 – 1990." Paper presented at the First International Conference on Women's Work in Music, Bangor University, 4 – 7 September 2017.

<sup>373</sup> Seddon, "Wood's women: The Henry Wood Proms and the woman composer, 1910 – 20," 2007. BL: C927/879 BD5.

In 1903, Arthur Elson described Maude Valérie White as ‘among the very best of England’s song writers’, and subsequent accounts by Hyde and Fuller have held her to similar acclaim.<sup>374</sup> This was duly reflected in the South Place concerts. Over the first 1000 concerts, White’s name makes the most regular appearance as a woman composer. Like many others, White had to work hard to persuade her mother to allow her to study at the Royal Academy of Music, as she was firmly against her daughter’s idea of taking up a public career. Fortunately, she won her mother’s approval and went on to become the first woman to win the Mendelssohn scholarship in 1879. After her mother died in 1881, White promoted her compositions in order to support herself, alongside her income from teaching and performing. Most of her compositions fell into the category of the Victorian drawing-room ballad, a genre very much associated with women composers in the late nineteenth century. Although she attempted to write instrumental music, she found it incredibly stressful and soon decided to abandon the idea, focusing the majority of her career on writing songs.<sup>375</sup> The struggles that she faced writing instrumental music indicate that public opinions about the abilities of women composers had affected her confidence in that genre. Nevertheless, many of the 200 songs that she composed were considered exceptional and eventually won her international recognition. Being a proficient linguist, White set music to words in a number of languages, inspired by poets such as Heinrich Heine, J.C.F. von Schiller, A. Petöfi, D. Kaerlighed and B. Bjørnson.<sup>376</sup> Her luscious melodies and rich harmonies appealed to vocalists, and her music was popular with the most famous singers of the day, including Clara Butt, Robert Kennerley Rumford, Louise Phillips, and Harry Plunket Greene, the latter two of whom performed White’s songs at the South Place concerts. White’s songs were performed regularly at other prestigious London concert series such as the ‘Pops’.<sup>377</sup> Furthermore, she regularly organised her own concerts, which was a common and necessary way for male and female composers of the time to promote their own works.

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<sup>374</sup> Elson, *Woman’s Work in Music*, 150; Hyde, *New Found Voices*, 67–69; Fuller, *The Pandora Guide to Women Composers*, 330.

<sup>375</sup> Fuller, “Women composers during the British Musical Renaissance 1880 – 1918.”, 166–7.

<sup>376</sup> Fuller, Sophie. “Maude Valérie White” in *Oxford Music Online*. Last modified 20 January 2001. Accessed July 2018.

<sup>377</sup> BL: Music Collections: d.480. Monday Popular Concerts – Saturday Popular Concerts. Examples of dates when White’s songs were performed at the ‘Pops’: 4 November 1900; 22 March 1902 and 24 February 1900.

The first of White's songs to be sung at South Place appeared as early as the third concert of the first series.<sup>378</sup> After this, White's music appeared nearly every year until after the war. Twenty of her songs were programmed and she was a popular choice for encores or last minute changes. The most regularly performed (around four or five times each) were *Ye Cupids*, *King Charles*, *To Mary* and *The Thristle*. *My Soul is an Enchanted Boat*, written in 1882, was described by Mrs. Edmond Wodehouse in the 1899 edition of *Grove's Dictionary* as 'one of the best [songs] in our language', but it was only performed once at South Place, by Reginald Davidson, at a concert of modern British music in February 1907.<sup>379</sup> *The Devout Lover*, which was performed four times, was also a popular song in London and typical of White's musical style. Performers such as Helen Trust, Marian McKenzie and Herbert Thorndike repeatedly chose her songs.

Fuller notes a general decline in White's popularity with critics and the musical establishment as early as the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but also that the music was still popular with the public and singers.<sup>380</sup> This was certainly true at South Place, which showed no decline in interest in her music until the war years. During World War One, White put her energy into organising concerts for war charities, and therefore probably had less time or inclination to promote her own music. Whether or not this was the reason for South Place's notable reduction in her music is unknown. Nevertheless, her songs heavily permeated the first thirty years of the concerts, and would have been well known to any regular attendee at South Place.

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<sup>378</sup> The third programme is missing from the collection, but the annual reports claim a song by White was performed in this series and her name is not on any other of the 6 programmes that made up the first series.

<sup>379</sup> SPES: Concert programme. 17<sup>th</sup> concert of the 21<sup>st</sup> series, 10 February 1907. Quotation from: Fuller, "Women composers during the British Musical Renaissance 1880 – 1918," 164.

<sup>380</sup> Fuller, *The Pandora Guide to Women Composers*, 332 – 4.

Image 27 - Concert Programme showing encore of White's 'A Youth Once Loved a Maiden'.<sup>381</sup>

**SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY,**  
SOUTH PLACE, FINSBURY, E.C.  
(Close to Broad Street, Liverpool Street, and Moorgate Street Stations.)

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**SOUTH PLACE SUNDAY POPULAR CONCERTS**

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**TWENTY-THIRD CONCERT OF THE ELEVENTH SEASON,**  
(THE TWO-HUNDRED-AND-FIFTY-SECOND CONCERT)  
Sunday, March 14th, 1897,  
COMMENCING AT 7 P.M. DOORS OPEN AT 6.40.

**COLLECTION TO DEFRAY EXPENSES.**  
The Committee have decided to continue these Concerts until Easter as usual, and therefore rely upon the Audience to subscribe as liberally as possible, as the expenses must be met.

Pianoforte ...	Madame LILY HENKEL.	Viola ...	Herr F. HARTUNG.
1st Violin ...	Mr. WALTER W. COBBETT.	Violoncello ...	Herr HUGO HÜNEFÜRST.
2nd Violin ...	Miss IDA STAMM.	Contra Basso ...	Mr. A. J. PUTTICK.
Vocalist ...	...	...	Mr. WILFRID CUNLIFFE.
Accompanist ...	...	...	Miss KATE AUGUSTA DAVIES.

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**Programme and Words of the Songs.**

1. SEXTET IN F SHARP MINOR, Op. 8. *Sterndale Bennett.*  
(b. 1816, d. 1875.)  
(For Pianoforte, Two Violins, Viola, Violoncello, and Contra Basso.)  
Allegro moderato ma con passione.  
Scherzo and Trio: Quasi Presto.  
Andante grazioso.  
Finale: Allegro assai ed energico.  
MADAME LILY HENKEL, MR. WALTER W. COBBETT,  
MISS IDA STAMM, HERR F. HARTUNG,  
HERR HUGO HÜNEFÜRST, AND MR. A. J. PUTTICK.

2. BALLAD..... "Jung Dietrich".....*Henschel.*  
(b. 1850.)  
MR. WILFRID CUNLIFFE.  
Defeated and slain with half of his host  
Was Theodemerus, King of the Goths.  
The Huns were shouting with fiendish mirth;  
The vultures hastened down to earth.  
The moon was bright, the wind was cold,  
The wolves were howling in distant wold.  
Three men were riding through heather and field,  
Their helmets battered and broken their shield;  
The first one bore in his saddle-string  
The broken spear of his murdered King;  
The second, he bore the King's crown, O woe!  
Split straight in two by the axe of a foe.  
The third, he hid with faithful arm,  
A secret veiled in his mantle warm—  
A veiled secret.  
And when they the river Ister espied  
The first one rested his horse and cried,  
Save a battered crown, and a broken spear,  
Of the Gothic Kingdom is nought to fear;  
And the second, he said, in those waters deep,  
Let us bury our treasure for ever to sleep,  
Then follow ourselves by a leap from the sand;  
Why tarry Master Hildebrand?  
Ye carry the King's own crown and spear,  
My faithful companions far more have I here;  
Thus saying he opened his cloak so warm,  
I carry the hope of the Goths in my arm,  
Ye saved spear and crown,  
'Twas bravely done.  
I, I have rescued the King's own son;  
Awake now, my boy, see how homage I bring,  
I greet thee Jung-Dietrich the Goth's new King.

3. DUETS FOR TWO VIOLINS—  
(a) Schlummerlied ..... *Ersfeld.*  
(b) Canon ..... *Bohm.*  
MR. WALTER W. COBBETT AND MISS IDA STAMM.

4. SONGS—  
(a) "None but a lonely heart".....*Tschaikowsky.*  
(b. 1840, d. 1893.)  
(b) "The tears that night and morning".....*M. V. White.*  
MR. WILFRID CUNLIFFE.  
(a) None but a lonely heart can know this anguish,  
How, of all joy bereft, I long and languish!  
Upon the firmament I gaze and wonder,  
Ah! from my heart's beloved I dwell asunder!  
My senses fail, a burning fire consumes me.  
(b) The tears that night and morning dim  
These aching eyes of mine,  
Love turns to bright and blooming flowers,  
And melodies divine.  
And if thou lov'st me, sweet one,  
Accept them all from me,  
And nightingales shall sweetly sing  
The love I bear to thee.

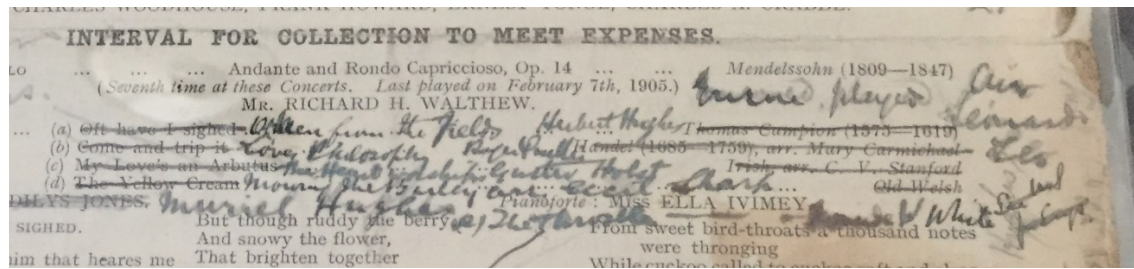
5. PIANOFORTE SOLOS—  
(a) Serenade .....*Stojowski.*  
(b. 1870.)  
(b) Paganini Caprice .....*Schumann.*  
(b. 1810, d. 1856.)  
MADAME LILY HENKEL.

6. SONG..... "Over the Desert".....*Lawrence Kellie.*  
MR. WILFRID CUNLIFFE.  
On, on in the morning,  
While the sun leaps up from the sea,  
Across the desert's lone waste of sand,  
I gallop, my love, to thee,  
I bend to my steed, as I urge him on,  
Haste with flying feet,  
Hasten, my Arab, ere day be done  
Carry me swift to my sweet.  
On, on in the morning, etc.

Encore - "A Youth once loved a Maiden" - from an album of German Song - pub. by Starkey & Co. London

<sup>381</sup> SPES: Concert Programme. 24rd concert of the 11<sup>th</sup> season, 14 March 1897.

Image 28 - White's *The Throstle* in changes to the programme.<sup>382</sup>



A good friend and at one time neighbour of White's was Liza Lehmann (1862 – 1918), whose success as a composer is confirmed through her roles in later life; Lehmann was the first president of the Society of Women Musicians in 1911 and had a position as a Professor at the Guildhall School of Music.<sup>383</sup> Lehmann composed musical comedies, a light opera and some pieces for voice and orchestra, but it was her extensive selection of songs that featured heavily in the South Place concerts.

Raised in London, Lehmann grew up in a wealthy family, with an artistic mother. Amelia Lehmann (1838 – 1903) was a teacher, composer and arranger of songs who usually published under the initials A.L.<sup>384</sup> Several of her compositions were performed at South Place in the same years as her daughter's. According to Liza Lehmann, her mother was extremely self-critical, which may have held her back from a more successful career. Despite her own reservations, Amelia Lehmann did provide her daughter with music lessons and encouraged her singing. Liza Lehmann was taught singing by the well-known singer Jenny Lind (1820 – 1887). Her debut performance was a recital at the Monday Pops in 1885, where she was warmly received. Despite a fairly successful career, particularly singing old English music, Lehmann gave her last performance before she got married to the composer, Herbert Bedford, in 1894. She had already published a couple of works by this point, and was pleased to be able to devote more time to composition after her marriage.<sup>385</sup> In 1896 she published a song-cycle called *In a Persian Garden*, which went on to become one of her most successful works. Initially, several publishers rejected it, as the music was expected not to appeal

<sup>382</sup> SPES: Concert Programme. 2<sup>nd</sup> concert of the 38<sup>th</sup> season, 14 October 1923.

<sup>383</sup> Lehmann, Liza. *The Life of Liza Lehmann, 1862 - 1918*. London: Fisher Unwin, 1919.

<sup>384</sup> Stephen Banfield. "Liza Lehmann." In *The New Grove Dictionary of Women Composers*, edited by Julie Anne Sadie and Rhian Samuel, 275. Reprint. London: The Macmillan Press Limited, 1994.

<sup>385</sup> Lehmann, *The Life of Liza Lehmann, 1862 - 1918*, 1919.

to the lucrative amateur market. Following an 'at home', which received an unusual amount of press attention for a private event, the work was published by Metzler and subsequently became very popular throughout the UK and the US. It was first performed at South Place in 1899 at a 'special vocal concert', with Josephine Troup as pianist.<sup>386</sup> Todd and Clements wrote in the annual reports about the work: 'it is encouraging to find that a work so far removed above the commonplace (which is supposed, often with only too much truth, to appeal to the public) should have become so popular as this beautiful song-cycle has done'.<sup>387</sup>

Following a successful first performance it was programmed another 17 times at the SPSPCs, sometimes just as individual songs but often as the full 36-minute cycle. The second time it appeared in full, in 1901, A. J. Clements wrote on the programme: 'Somewhat indigestive programme!' (Image 30).<sup>388</sup> Clements may have felt that five vocal works and four instrumental pieces, all by different composers and with different ensembles, was too heavy. The 9.37pm finishing time was also slightly later than the usual length of a concert. The following month another vocal concert was held, with a simpler programme featuring both *In a Persian Garden* and another popular song-cycle by Lehmann, *The Daisy-Chain*, which were only interspersed by three relatively short violin solos. Even with the many encores that followed the first performance of *The Daisy-Chain* at South Place, the concert still finished at 9.15pm (see Image 31). Following performances of *In a Persian Garden* were also mostly programmed as the major part of a special vocal concert. The vocal concerts usually only happened once a season and were often the last concert, indicating that they were popular with a South Place audience who might be persuaded to donate more money for a vocal concert at the end of the season when the committee was low on funds. For example, after its first performance the whole work was repeated at the end of the season in order to attract a large audience, which it did. The cycle was also a key feature of the last concert of the 17<sup>th</sup> season, when there was a deficit of £34. It was also performed in full in 1912 at the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first South Place concert, sung by Winifred

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<sup>386</sup> SPES: Concert programme. 9<sup>th</sup> concert of the 14<sup>th</sup> season, 26 November 1899.

<sup>387</sup> SPES/7/1/14: South Place Sunday Popular Concert Committee Annual Reports (SPSPC): 1899 - 1900.

<sup>388</sup> SPES: Concert programme. 16<sup>th</sup> concert of the 15<sup>th</sup> season 1900, 3 February 1901.



Marwood, Palgrave Turner, Hubert Eisdell and Montague Borwell. One song, / *Sometimes Think*, was also programmed in the women composers' concert.

Image 29 - Special Vocal Concert programme.<sup>389</sup>

**SOUTH PLACE SUNDAY POPULAR CONCERTS**  
**SIXTEENTH CONCERT OF THE FIFTEENTH SEASON (the 349th Concert),**  
**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 3rd, 1901, at 7 p.m. Doors Open at 6.40.**

**SPECIAL VOCAL AND INSTRUMENTAL CONCERT.**

1. SONATA IN G, Op. 78, for Pianoforte and Violin *Brahms.*  
 1. Vivace ma non troppo. 2. Adagio—Piu Andante—Adagio come 1°. 3. Allegro molto moderato—Piu moderato.  
 MR. RICHARD H. WALTHER AND MR. HANS WESSELY.

2. CANZONET *Haydn.*  
 "The Spirit Song"  
 Miss ETHEL BEVANS.  
 Hark! what I tell to thee,  
 Nor sorrow o'er the tomb,  
 My spirit wanders free,  
 And waits till thine shall come.  
 All pensive and alone  
 I see thee sit and weep,  
 Thy head upon the stone  
 Where my cold ashes sleep.  
 I watch thy speaking eyes,  
 And mark each falling tear,  
 I catch thy passing sighs,  
 Ere they are lost in air.  
 Hark! what I tell to thee,  
 Nor sorrow o'er the tomb,  
 My spirit wanders free,  
 And waits till thine shall come.

3. SONG *Beethoven.*  
 "Adelaide"  
 Mr. W. R. MAXWELL.  
 Wand'ring lone 'mid the spring flow'rs of the garden,  
 By their tender enchantment surrounded,  
 Still does mem'ry renew its lightning flashes!  
 Adelaide!  
 In the gleam of the flood, in Alpine snowdrifts,  
 In the day's sinking beam of golden glory,  
 In the bright stars above me shines thy image,  
 Adelaide!  
 Night airs soft thro' the tender branches whisper,  
 Silver May bells in ev'ry grassy valley  
 Gently murmur, the nightingale warbles—  
 Adelaide!  
 Soon, oh wonder, a flower sadly drooping  
 O'er my tomb will enfold my bosom's sorrows,  
 Still revealing, in ev'ry purple leaflet,  
 Adelaide!

\* 4. PIANOFORTE SOLOS.. Forest Scenes: (a) The Prophet-Bird; (b) Hunting Song *Schumann.*  
 MR. RICHARD H. WALTHER.

5. SONG-CYCLE *LIZA LEHMANN.*  
 For Four Solo Voices, with Pianoforte Accompaniment, the Words selected from the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam. (Fitzgerald's Translation.)  
 (The Words are printed in this Programme by kind permission of Messrs. Macmillan & Co., Limited.)  
 SOPRANO, MISS LENA MAITLAND. CONTRALTO, MISS ETHEL BEVANS. TENOR, MR. W. R. MAXWELL. BASS, MR. F. FRANKLIN CLIVE.  
 PIANOFORTE ... MISS KATE AUGUSTA DAVIES.

*Spring Song*  
*Free.*

**Quartette.**  
 Wake! For the Sun who scatter'd into flight  
 The Stars before him from the field of night,  
 Drives night along with them from Heav'n, and  
 The Sultan's turret with a shaft of Light. [strikes]

**Tenor.**  
 Before the phantom of false morning died  
 Methought a voice within the Tavern cried:  
 "When all the Temple is prepared within  
 Why nods the drowsy Worshipper outside?"

**Bass.**  
 Now the new year reviving old Desires,  
 The thoughtful Soul to Solitude retires, [Bough  
 Where the "White Hand of Moses" on the  
 Puts out, and Jesus from the Ground suspies.

**Tenor.**  
 Iram indeed is gone with all his Rose, [knows  
 And Jamshyd's sev'n-ring'd Cup where no one  
 But still a Ruby kindles in the Vine,  
 And many a Garden by the water blows.

**Quartette.**  
 Come, fill the Cup, and in the fire of Spring  
 Your Winter-garment of Repentance fling,  
 The Bird of Time has but a little way  
 To fly—and lo, the Bird is on the wing!

**Bass.**  
 Whether at Naishapur or Babylon,  
 Whether the Cup with sweet or bitter run,  
 The Wine of Life keeps oozing drop by drop,  
 The Leaves of Life keep falling one by one.

**Contralto.**  
 Ah, not a drop that from our Cups we throw  
 For Earth to drink of, but may steal below,  
 To quench the fire of Anguish in some Eye  
 There hidden, far beneath, and long ago.  
 I sometimes think that never blows so red  
 The Rose as where some buried Caesar bled,  
 That ev'ry Hyacinth the Garden wears  
 Dropt in her lap from some once lovely head.  
 And this reviving Herb, whose tender green  
 Fledges the river-lip on which we lean,—  
 Ah—lean upon it lightly—for who knows  
 From what once lovely Lip it springs unseen.

**Soprano and Tenor.**  
 A Book of Verses underneath the Bough,  
 A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread—and Thou  
 Beside me singing in the Wilderness—  
 Ah, Wilderness were Paradise enow!

**Bass.**  
 Myself when young did eagerly frequent  
 Doctor and Saint and heard great argument—  
 but evermore  
 Came out by that same door where I went.  
 With them the Seed of Wisdom did I Sow,  
 And with my own Hand labour'd it to grow,  
 And this was all the harvest that I reap'd,  
 "I came like Water, and like Wind I go."  
 Why, all the Saints and Sages who discuss'd  
 Of the two Worlds so learnedly, are thrust  
 Like foolish Prophets forth; their words to scorn  
 Are scatter'd, and their mouths are stopp'd with  
 Dust.  
 Ah, make the most of what we yet may spend,  
 Before we too into the Dust descend!

**Contralto.**  
 When you and I behind the veil are past [last—  
 Oh, but the long, long while the World shall

**Soprano.**  
 But if the Soul can fling the Dust aside  
 And naked on the air of Heaven ride,  
 Were't not a shame—were't not a shame for him  
 In this clay carcass crippled to abide?  
 I sent my Soul through the Invisible,  
 Some secret of that after-life to spell,  
 And by-and-bye my Soul return'd to me  
 And answer'd: I myself am Heav'n and Hell.  
 Heav'n but the vision of fulfilled Desire  
 And Hell the Shadow from a Soul on fire,  
 Cast on the Darkness into which ourselves,  
 So late emerged from, shall so soon expire.

**Tenor.**  
 Alas! that Spring should vanish with the Rose!  
 That youth's sweet-scented manuscript should  
 close!

**Contralto.**  
 The Nightingale that in the Branches sang,  
 Ah, whence and whither flown again, who  
 knows?—

**Contralto.**  
 The worldly hope men set their Hearts upon  
 Turns Ashes, or it prospers; and anon  
 Like Snow upon the Desert's dusty face,  
 Lighting a little hour or two—is gone.  
 Think, in this batter'd Caravanserai,  
 Whose Portals are alternate Night and Day,  
 How Sultan after Sultan with his Pomp,  
 Abode his destined hour and went his way.  
 Waste not your hour

**Soprano.**  
 Each morn a thousand Roses brings, you say;  
 Yes—but where leaves the Rose of yesterday?—  
 And this first Summer month that brings the  
 Shall take Jamshyd and Kaikobad away. [Rose,

**Quartette.**  
 They say the Lion and the Lizard keep [deep,  
 The Courts where Jamshyd gloried and drank  
 And Bahram, that wild Hunter,—the wild Ass  
 Stamps o'er his Head, but cannot break his sleep.  
 Lo, some we lov'd, the loveliest and best  
 That from his Vintage rolling Time has prest,  
 Have drunk their Cup a round or two before,  
 And one by one crept silently to rest.  
 Strange, is it not, that of the myriads who  
 Before us pass'd the Door of Darkness through,  
 Not one returns to tell us of the Road  
 Which to discover we must travel too.

**Tenor.**  
 Ah, fill the Cup! What boots it to repeat  
 How time is slipping underneath our Feet.  
 Better be jocund with the fruitful Grape  
 Than sadden after none, or bitter Fruit.  
 Ah, Love, could you and I with Fate conspire  
 To grasp the sorry Scheme of things entire,  
 Would we not shatter it to bits—and then  
 Remould it nearer to the Heart's Desire!

**Bass.**  
 Ah, Moon of my Delight, that knows no wane,  
 The Moon of Heav'n is rising once again—  
 How oft hereafter rising shall she look  
 Through this same Garden after me—in vain.  
 And when thyself with shining Foot shall pass  
 Among the Guests Star-scattered on the Grass,  
 And in thy joyous Errand reach the Spot  
 Where I made one—turn down an empty Glass!

**Bass.**  
 As then the Tulip for her morning sup  
 Of Heav'nly Vintage from the Soil looks up,  
 Do you devoutly do the like, till Heav'n  
 To earth invert you—like an empty Cup.  
 So when that Angel of the darker Drink  
 At last shall find you by the river-brink,  
 And, offering his Cup, invite your Soul  
 Forth to your Lips to quaff—you shall not shrink.

**Quartette.**  
 Alas, that Spring should vanish with the Rose,  
 That Youth's sweet-scented Manuscript should  
 The Nightingale that in the Branches sang, [close!  
 Ah, whence and whither flown again, who knows?

<sup>389</sup> SPES: Concert programme. 16<sup>th</sup> concert of the 15<sup>th</sup> season, 3 February 1901.



6. VIOLIN SOLOS . . . . . Gipsy Song and Gipsy Dance . . . . . 'Coleridge-Taylor.  
Mr. HANS WESSELY.

7. SONG . . . . . "Angels Guard Thee" . . . . . Godard  
Miss LENA MAITLAND.

Beneath the quivering leaves,  
Where shelter comes at last,  
All sadness sinks at rest;  
Or glides into the past;  
Her sweet eyes prison'd now  
In their soft silken bars,  
O! my love, calm she sleeps  
Beneath the trembling stars.

Ah! wake not yet from thy repose,  
A fair dream spirit hovers near thee,  
Weaving a web of gold and rose,  
Through dreamland's happy isles to bear  
thee!  
Sleep, love, it is not yet the dawn,  
Angels guard thee, sweet love, till morn!

Far from the noisy throng  
By songbirds lull'd to rest,  
Where rock the branches high  
By breezes soft caress'd:  
Softly the days go on,  
By sorrow all unharm'd  
Thus may life be to thee  
A sweet existence charm'd.  
Ah! wake not yet, etc.

8. BALLAD . . . . . "The Wreck of the Hesperus" . . . . . J. L. Hatton.  
Mr. F. FRANKLIN CLIVE.

It was the schooner Hesperus,  
That sailed the wintry sea;  
And the skipper had ta'en his little daughter  
To bear him company.

Blue were her eyes as the fairy flax,  
Her cheeks like the dawn of day,  
And her bosom white as the hawthorn buds  
That ope in the month of May.

The skipper he stood beside the helm,  
His pipe was in his mouth,  
And he watched how the veering flaw did blow  
The smoke—now west—now south.

Then up and spake an old sailor  
Had sailed the Spanish Main,  
"I pray thee put into yonder port,  
For I fear a hurricane.

Last night the moon had a golden ring,  
And to-night no moon we see!"  
The skipper he blew a whiff from his pipe,  
And a scornful laugh laughed he.

Down came the storm, and smote amain  
The vessel in its strength;  
She shuddered and paus'd, like a frightened steed,  
Then leaped her cable's length.  
"Come hither! come hither! my little daughter,  
And do not tremble so,  
For I can weather the roughest gale  
That ever the wind did blow."  
"O father! I hear the church-bells ring,  
Oh! say what may it be?"  
"Tis a fog-bell on a rock-bound coast  
And he steered for the open sea."  
"O father! I see a gleaming light,  
Oh! say what may it be?"  
But the father answered never a word,  
A frozen corpse was he.  
Lashed to the helm, all stiff and stark,  
With his face turned to the skies,  
The lantern gleamed, through the gleaming snow,  
On his fixed and glassy eyes.  
Then the maiden clasped her hands, and prayed  
That saved she might be;  
And she thought of Him who stilled the waves  
On the Lake of Galilee.

But fast thro' the midnight dark and drear,  
Thro' the whistling sleet and snow,  
Like a sheeted ghost the vessel swept  
To the reef of Norman's Woe.

Her rattling shrouds, all sheathed in ice,  
With the masts went by the board;  
Like a vessel of glass she stove and sank,  
Oh! oh! the breakers roared!

At day-break on the bleak sea-beach  
A fisherman stood aghast,  
To see the form of a maiden fair  
Lashed close to a drifting mast.

The salt sea was frozen on her breast,  
The salt tears in her eyes,  
And he saw her hair, like the brown seaweed,  
On the billows fall and rise.

Such was the wreck of the Hesperus,  
In the midnight and the snow;  
God save us all from a death like this  
On the reef of Norman's Woe!

9. SONATA IN F, Op. 8, for Pianoforte and Violin . . . . . Grieg. / 5  
1. Allegro con brio. 2. Allegretto quasi andantino. 3. Allegro molto vivace.  
Mr. RICHARD H. WALTHER AND Mr. HANS WESSELY.

Accompanist—Miss KATE AUGUSTA DAVIES.

As the Programmes are generally sufficiently lengthy, and the concluding work invariably important, it is hoped  
that the Audience will refrain from encores.

**SILENCE** is requested during the music. Those leaving should do so between the pieces.

GRAND PIANOFORTE BY MESSRS. STEINWAY & SONS.

ADMISSION is free, but each person in the audience is expected to contribute, according to  
his or her means, to the COLLECTION, from which all expenses have to be paid. The  
Committee, relying upon adequate support, have determined to continue the present  
Season every Sunday until March 24th, inclusive.

CHILDREN NOT ADMITTED UNLESS ACCOMPANIED BY A GROWN-UP PERSON.

Hon. Treas. (pro tem.), JOHN ALDRED, 88 Chancery Lane, W.C. Hon. Sec., ALFRED J. CLEMENTS, 25 Camden Road, N.W.

## THE 350th CONCERT.

On Sunday next, February 10th, at 7 p.m., will take place the Seventeenth Concert of the Season and  
THREE-HUNDRED-AND-FIFTIETH SOUTH PLACE SUNDAY POPULAR CONCERT.

The following Artists will appear on this occasion:—

Violins . . . . . Miss JESSIE GRIMSON and Mr. HAROLD GRIMSON.  
Violas . . . . . Mr. S. DEAN GRIMSON and Miss ANNIE GRIMSON.  
Violoncellos . . . . . Miss AMY GRIMSON and Mr. EDWARD MASON.  
Pianoforte . . . . . Miss ANNIE GRIMSON and Miss AMY GRIMSON.  
Vocalist . . . . . Miss DELIA MASON.  
Accompanist . . . . . Miss KATE AUGUSTA DAVIES.

The Programme will include Quintet on Swiss Melodies by JOSEPH LAUBER (first time in England),  
and DVORAK'S String Sextet.

For Advertisements of these Concerts see "The Daily Telegraph" every Saturday.

THE SOUTH PLACE ORCHESTRAL SOCIETY meets for Practice in this building every FRIDAY. Hours 7.45 to 9.45 p.m. Entrance  
Fee, 2s. 6d.; Monthly Subscription, 1s. Ladies and Gentlemen wishing to join should communicate with the Hon. Conductor,  
T. EUSTACE BARRALET, "Dunkerry," Sidney Road, Muswell Hill, N.; the Hon. Treas., J. P. CDDO, 57 Sulgrave Road,  
Shepherd's Bush, W.; or the Hon. Sec., ALFRED J. CLEMENTS, 25 Camden Road, N.W.

KENNY & CO., TRADE UNION PRINTERS, 25 CAMDEN ROAD, N.W.

*Concert must be somewhat indigestive programme!  
Rather more than the "enough" that constitutes the true feast*



Image 31 - Special Vocal Concert programme featuring Lehmann's *In a Persian Garden* and *The Daisy Chain*.<sup>391</sup>

**SOUTH PLACE SUNDAY POPULAR CONCERTS.**  
**TWENTY-THIRD & LAST CONCERT OF FIFTEENTH SEASON** (the 350th Concert)  
**SUNDAY, MARCH 24th, 1901, at 7 p.m.** Doors Open at 6.40.  
**ADMISSION FREE, WITH COLLECTION.** Amount Required ... £20 10s.

**SPECIAL VOCAL CONCERT.** *Wieniawski.*

1. VIOLIN SOLO ... Second Concerto, in D, minor, Op. 22 ... *Allegro moderato.* ... *Allegro moderato (à la Zingara).*  
 1. *Allegro moderato.* ... 2. Romance: Andante non troppo. ... 3. *Allegro con fuoco* - *Allegro moderato*  
 MR. SPENCER DYKE. Accompanist: MR. LIONEL TERTIS.

2. SONG-CYCLE ... **"IN A PERSIAN GARDEN"** ... **LIZA LEHMANN.**  
 For Four Solo Voices, with Pianoforte Accompaniment, the Words selected from the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyám. (Fitzgerald's Translation.)  
 (The Words are printed in this Programme by kind permission of Messrs. Macmillan & Co., Limited.)  
 SOPRANO ... MISS EVANGELINE FLORENCE. TENOR ... MR. JOSEPH O'MARA.  
 CONTRALTO ... MADAME MARIAN MCKENZIE. BARITONE ... MR. DENIS O'SULLIVAN.  
 PIANOFORTE ... MR. LEONARD W. CHALK.

*Quartette.*  
 Wake! For the Sun who scatter'd into flight  
 The Stars before him from the field of night,  
 Drives night along with them from Heav'n, and  
 The Sultan's turret with a shaft of Light. [strikes  
*Tenor.*  
 Before the phantom of false morning died  
 Methought a voice within the Tavern cried:  
 "When all the Temple is prepared within  
 Why nods the drowsy Worshipper outside?"  
*Bass.*  
 Now the new year reviving old Desires,  
 The thoughtful Soul to Solitude retires, [Bough  
 Where the "White Hand of Moses" on the  
 Puts out, and Jesus from the Ground suspires.  
*Tenor.*  
 Iram indeed is gone with all his Rose, [knows  
 And Jamshyd's sev'n-ring'd Cup where no one  
 But still a Ruby kindles in the Vine,  
 And many a Garden by the water blows.  
*Quartette.*  
 Come, fill the Cup, and in the fire of Spring  
 Your Winter-garment of Repentance fling.  
 The Bird of Time has but a little way  
 To fly—and lo, the Bird is on the wing!  
*Bass.*  
 Whether at Naishapur or Babylon,  
 Whether the Cup with sweet or bitter run,  
 The Wine of Life keeps oozing drop by drop,  
 The Leaves of Life keep falling one by one.  
*Contralto.*  
 Ah, not a drop that from our Cups we throw  
 For Earth to drink of, but may steal below,  
 To quench the fire of Anguish in some Eye  
 There hidden, far beneath, and long ago.  
 I sometimes think that never blows so red  
 The Rose as where some buried Cæsar bled,  
 That e'er Hyacinth the Garden wears  
 Dropt in her lap from some once lovely head.  
 And this reviving Herb, whose tender green  
 Fledges the river-lip on which we lean,—  
 Ah—lean upon it lightly—for who knows  
 From what once lovely Lip it springs unseen.  
*Soprano and Tenor.*  
 A Book of Verses underneath the Bough,  
 A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread—and Thou  
 Beside me singing in the Wilderness—  
 Ah, Wilderness were Paradise enow!

3. VIOLIN SOLOS ... (a) Benedictus ... Mackenzie; (b) Zigeunerweisen  
 MR. SPENCER DYKE. Accompanist: MR. LIONEL TERTIS.

4. SONG-CYCLE ... **"THE DAISY-CHAIN"** (TWELVE SONGS OF CHILDHOOD) ... **LIZA LEHMANN.**  
 SOPRANO ... MISS EVANGELINE FLORENCE. TENOR ... MR. JOSEPH O'MARA.  
 CONTRALTO ... MADAME MARIAN MCKENZIE. BARITONE ... MR. DENIS O'SULLIVAN.  
 PIANOFORTE ... MR. LEONARD W. CHALK.

I. "FOREIGN CHILDREN" (Quartette)  
 Little Indian, Sioux, or Crow,  
 Little frosty Eskimo,  
 Little Turk or Japanese,  
 Oh! don't you wish that you were  
 me?  
 You have seen the scarlet trees,  
 And the lions over seas;  
 You have eaten ostrich eggs,  
 And turned the turtles off their legs.  
 Such a life is very fine,  
 But it's not so nice as mine;  
 You must often as you trod,  
 Have wearied not to be abroad.  
 You have curious things to eat,  
 I am fed on proper meat;  
 You must dwell beyond the foam,  
 But I am safe and live at home.  
 By kind permission of Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co.

II. "FAIRIES." (Song: Contralto.)  
 At twilight in beautiful Summers,  
 When all the dew is shed,  
 And all the singers and hummers  
 Are safe at home in bed,  
 In many a nook of the meadows  
 Fairies may linger and lurk;  
 Look! under the long grass shadows,  
 Perhaps you may see them at work.  
 Perhaps you'll see them swinging  
 On see-saw reeds in the dells;  
 Perhaps you'll hear them ringing  
 The sweet little heather bells;  
 Or setting the lilies steady,  
 Before they begin to grow;  
 Or getting the rosebuds ready,  
 Before it is time to blow.  
 ANON.

From "Poems written for a Child," published by Messrs. Strachan.

<sup>391</sup> SPES: Concert programme. 23<sup>rd</sup> concert of the 15<sup>th</sup> season, 24 March 1901.



III. "KEEPSAKE MILL." (Song: *Baritone*.)  
Here is the mill with the humming of thunder,  
Here is the weir with the wonder of foam,  
Here is the sluice with the race running under,—  
Marvellous places, though handy to home!  
Sounds of the village grow stiller and stiller,  
Stiller the note of the birds on the hill;  
Dusty and dim are the eyes of the miller,  
Deaf are his ears to the moil of the mill.

IV. "IF NO ONE EVER MARRIES ME."  
(Song: *Soprano*.)  
If no one ever marries me,—  
And I don't see why they should,  
For nurse says I'm not pretty,  
And I'm seldom very good,—

V. "STARS" ("Escape at Bed-time.")  
(Song: *Tenor*.)  
The lights from the parlour and kitchen shone out  
Through the blinds, and the windows, and bars;  
And high over-head and all moving about,  
There were thousands and millions of stars.  
There ne'er were such thousands of leaves on a tree,  
Nor of people in church or the park,  
As the crowds of the stars that looked down upon me,  
And that glittered and winked in the dark.

VI. "SEEING THE WORLD."  
(Quartette.)  
Rosy, Posy, and little Clover  
Wished to roam the wide world over,  
Left their beds at dawn of day,  
Opened the door and stole away.

VII. "THE SHIP THAT SAILED INTO THE SUN."  
(Song: *Contralto*.)  
They say my brother's ship went down,  
Down into the sea,  
Because a storm came on to drown  
The biggest ships that be;

VIII. "THE SWING." (Song: *Soprano*.)  
How do you like to go up in a swing,  
Up in the air so blue?  
Oh, I do think it the pleasantest thing  
Ever a child can do!

IX. "MUSTARD AND CRESS."  
(Song: *Baritone*.)  
Elizabeth, my cousin, is the sweetest little girl,  
From her eyes, like dark blue Pansies, to her tiniest golden curl;  
I do not use her great long name, but simply call her "Bess,"  
And yesterday I planted her in Mustard and in Cress.

X. "THE MOON." (Song: *Tenor*.)  
The moon has a face like the clock in the hall;  
She shines on thieves on the garden wall,  
On streets and fields and harbour quays,  
And birdies asleep in the forks of the trees.

XI. "THANK YOU VERY MUCH INDEED." (Quartette.)  
Thank you very much indeed,  
River, for your waving reed;  
Hollyhocks, for budding knobs;  
Foxgloves, for your velvet fobs;

XII. "BLIND MAN'S BUFF."  
(Quartette.)  
Ah! catch me, if you can!  
Catch me, catch me, catch me,  
If you can!

Years may go by, and the wheel in the river  
Wheel as it wheels for us, children, to-day,  
Wheel and keep roaring and foaming for ever,  
Long after all of the boys are away.  
Home from the Indies and home from the Ocean,  
Heroes and soldiers, we all shall come home;  
Still we shall hear the old mill-wheel in motion,  
Turning and churning that river to foam.  
(From "A Child's Garden of Verses.") ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.  
By kind permission of Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co.

If no one ever marries me  
I sha'n't mind very much;  
I shall buy a squirrel in a cage,  
And a little rabbit-hutch;  
I shall have a cottage near a wood,  
And a pony all my own,  
And a little lamb quite clean and tame,  
That I can take to town:

And when I'm getting really old—  
At twenty-eight or nine—  
I shall buy a little orphan girl  
And bring her up as mine.—  
(If no one ever marries me,—  
And I don't see why they should!)

From "Little Girls" (Realms of Unknown Kings.)  
LAURENCE ALMA-TADEMA.  
Published by Mr. Grant Richards.

The Dog, and the Plough, and the Hunter, and all,  
And the star of the Sailor, and Mars,  
These shone in the sky, and the pail by the wall  
Would be half full of water and stars.  
They saw me at last, and they chased me with cries,  
And they so n had me packed into bed;  
But the glory kept shining, and bright in my eyes,  
And the stars going round in my head.  
(From "A Child's Garden of Verses.") ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.  
By kind permission of Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co.

So they stood beside the gate  
Till the clock was striking eight,  
And grandmamma came out to see  
Where the little ones could be.

Rosy, Posy, and little Clover  
Wished to roam the wide world over,  
But, not knowing where to roam,  
Turned about and stayed at home,  
(From "Little Men & Women.")

Saxon's "Everybody's Series," published by Messrs. Russell & Co.  
Onward it went till it touched the sun,—  
I saw the ship take hold!  
(From "Lilliput Lyrics.") W. B. RANDES.  
By kind permission of Mr. John Lane.

Up in the air I go flying again,  
Up in the air and down!—Ah!—Ah!  
(From "A Child's Garden of Verses.")  
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.  
By kind permission of  
Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co.

My garden is so narrow that there's very little room,  
But I'd rather have her name than get a Hollyhock to bloom;  
And before she comes to visit us with Charlie and with Jess,  
She'll pop up green and bonny out of Mustard and of Cress—  
She'll pop up green and bonny out of Mustard and of Cress!  
(From "Songs for Little People.") NORMAN GALE.  
Published by Messrs. A. Constable & Co.

The squalling cat and the squeaking mouse,  
The howling dog by the door of the house,  
The bat that lies in bed at noon,  
All love to be out by the light of the moon.  
But all of the things that belong to the day  
Cuddle to sleep to be out of her way;

And flowers and children close their eyes  
Till up in the morning the sun shall arise.  
(From "A Child's Garden of Verses.")  
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.  
By kind permission of  
Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co.

Autumn, for the bearded load,  
Hazelnuts along the road;  
Winter, for the fairy-tale,  
Spitting log and bouncing hail.  
But, blest Father, high above,  
All these joys are from thy love;

And your children everywhere,  
Born in palace, lane, or square,  
Cry with voices all agreed,  
"Thank You very much indeed."  
(From "Songs for Little People.")  
NORMAN GALE.  
Published by Messrs. A. Constable & Co.

Was there ever such a game  
As "Blind man's buff?"  
No, there never was a game  
Like "Blind man's buff."  
Our fathers and our mothers played before us,  
Our grandfathers and grandmothers before us,

And I verily believe  
That the chicks of mother Eve  
Played the self-same game,  
Played it just the same!  
Ah! catch me, if you can!  
Catch me, catch me, catch me,  
If you can!

ANON.

THE SIXTEENTH SEASON of the SOUTH PLACE SUNDAY POPULAR CONCERTS  
will begin on Sunday, OCTOBER 6th, 1901, at 7 p.m. Doors open at 6.40.  
Further particulars, with Report of the Fifteenth Season, will be issued in September.

On SUNDAY NEXT, March 31st, an ORCHESTRAL CONCERT will be given by the SOUTH PLACE ORCHESTRAL SOCIETY (Hon. Conductor, Mr. T. EUSTACE BARRALET). The programme will include MOZART'S "Linz" Symphony in C, SCHUBERT'S "Rosamunde" Overture, and other Orchestral Works. Solo Violin, Mr. JOHN SAUNDERS, who will play SAINT-SAENS' Concerto in A, with Orchestra. Vocalist, Miss ETHEL BEVANS. Accompanist, Miss EDITH SWEPSTONE. Doors open at 6.40 p.m. Concert at 7 p.m. ADMISSION free, with COLLECTION.

KENNY & CO. TRADE UNION PRINTERS, 25 CAMDEN ROAD, N.W.

Concert over at 9.15

The success of *In a Persian Garden* generally was largely attributed to the rich harmonic and melodic material in Lehmann's composition, which was modern yet appealed to popular taste. The bold, dissonant harmonies between the four vocal parts and the piano accompaniment make it still sound interesting today. Lehmann's work brought the song-cycle into popularity with the British musicians and public. There are themes that run throughout the cycle and the vocal melody switches between dramatic recitative style and lyrical writing.<sup>393</sup> The text for the song cycle was also a factor towards its success. Edward FitzGerald's translation and adaptation of the *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* was published in 1859, and became one of the most popular pieces of literature for the Victorians. Lehmann used extracts of the quatrains for her song-cycle. Some reviewers expressed concern that it would be impossible for Lehmann's music to match the significance of the text. But the majority of contemporary reviews praise Lehmann for her text setting, often saying that her unexpected treatment of the language added a new layer of interpretation to the meaning of the text. Although there are debates over Omar Khayyam's religious beliefs, he was known to teach philosophy and was often described as an agnostic hedonist. It is possible that a South Place audience would have appreciated the philosophical and religious considerations that can be drawn from Khayyam's writing, and this could have contributed to its distinct popularity at South Place; it was performed either in part or in full fifteen times between 1899 and 1916 - more than any other song in the first thousand concerts.

Whilst *In a Persian Garden* was arguably Lehmann's most popular work and certainly the most regularly performed at South Place, many more of Lehmann's compositions also achieved success in London more generally and at South Place in particular. The first piece to appear was a song called *The Castilian Maid*, written to words by Thomas Moore and performed by Kathleen Grant.<sup>394</sup> Performed during South Place's 6<sup>th</sup> season in 1891, it was one of a small number of songs by Lehmann to be programmed at South Place before the success of *In a Persian Garden*. In the early twentieth century, more of Lehmann's songs were regularly performed at South Place. During the sixteenth season Joseph O'Mara performed another song-cycle by Lehmann, *Cameos*

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<sup>393</sup> Fuller, *The Pandora Guide to Women Composers*, 182 - 83.

<sup>394</sup> SPES: Concert programme. 7<sup>th</sup> concert of the 6<sup>th</sup> season, 15 November 1891.

(*Five Greek Love Songs*), which was also well received. Comments written on the programme by Clements include: ‘Much cleverness and charm herein’; ‘Big encore – sang no. 4 again’ and ‘Capital setting’ next to song number five.<sup>395</sup> Some of the individual songs were repeated in subsequent concerts. Another 20-minute song-cycle called *Songs of Love and Spring* was performed in 1908. Moreover, several of her popular children’s songs were performed, including *Songs of Childhood*, *Every night my prayers I say*, *The Captain* and *Marching Song*. Many more of her regular short songs also appeared, as shown in Table 5:<sup>396</sup>

Table 5 - Songs by Liza Lehmann in the South Place programmes.

<b>Song by Liza Lehmann</b>	<b>Date of performance at South Place</b>
<i>At Love’s Beginning</i>	11 <sup>th</sup> concert of the 21 <sup>st</sup> season, 16 December 1906
<i>Daddy’s Sweetheart</i>	21 <sup>st</sup> concert of the 26 <sup>th</sup> season, 3 March 1912 (encore)
<i>Guardian Angel</i>	25 <sup>th</sup> concert of the 19 <sup>th</sup> season, 9 April 1905 13 <sup>th</sup> concert of the 20 <sup>th</sup> season, 7 January 1906
<i>Long Ago in Egypt</i>	12 <sup>th</sup> concert of the 18 <sup>th</sup> season, 10 January 1904
<i>Lovers in the Lane</i>	16 <sup>th</sup> concert of the 29 <sup>th</sup> season, 24 January 1915 (concert of women composers)
<i>Sleep Little Ruffly Fluffly Bird</i>	22 <sup>nd</sup> concert of the 19 <sup>th</sup> season, 19 March 1905
<i>Soul’d Blossom</i>	12 <sup>th</sup> concert of the 18 <sup>th</sup> season, 10 January 1904
<i>Tatiana’s Cradle</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> concert of the 16 <sup>th</sup> season, 20 October 1901
<i>The Cuckoo</i>	13 <sup>th</sup> concert of the 20 <sup>th</sup> season, 7 January 1906 17 <sup>th</sup> concert of the 24 <sup>th</sup> season, 6 February 1910
<i>The Life of a Rose</i>	10 <sup>th</sup> concert of the 21 <sup>st</sup> season, 9 December 1906
<i>The Mad Dog (The Vicar of Wakefield)</i>	4 <sup>th</sup> concert of the 22 <sup>nd</sup> season, 27 October 1907 9 <sup>th</sup> concert of the 27 <sup>th</sup> season, 1 December 1912 18 <sup>th</sup> concert of the 29 <sup>th</sup> season, 7 February 1915
<i>The Passion Flower</i>	19 <sup>th</sup> concert of the 21 <sup>st</sup> season, 24 February 1907
<i>The Wood-Pigeon and The Yellowhammer</i>	17 <sup>th</sup> concert of the 24 <sup>th</sup> season, 6 February 1910
<i>Under the Greenwood Tree</i>	7 <sup>th</sup> concert of the 29 <sup>th</sup> season, 15 November 1914

Similarly to White, many of Lehmann’s songs were often performed as encores, as well as being in the main programme. Out of her more extensive works, only *In Memoriam* was performed at South Place.<sup>397</sup> Lehmann considered this to be one of her best works, but like many other venues, South Place preferred her lighter music, which

<sup>395</sup> SPES: Concert programme. 20<sup>th</sup> concert of the 16<sup>th</sup> season, 2 March 1902.

<sup>396</sup> SPES: Concert programmes.

<sup>397</sup> SPES: Concert programme. 9<sup>th</sup> concert of the 38<sup>th</sup> season, 2 December 1923.

seems slightly at odds with their commitment to 'serious' chamber works. In the context of this study, it is disappointing that they did not programme *The Golden Threshold* (1906), an Indian song garland set to words by poet and suffragette, Sarojini Naidu.<sup>398</sup>

Like many of her contemporaries, Lehmann was proud of being discriminating about her use of literature. Examples of her inspiration can be found in her music composed to the work of Victorian writers such as Tennyson, Lewis Carol, Rudyard Kipling and Oscar Wilde. She also held strong feminist views. In response to questions from the press about women's ability to compose she blamed inequality in education for the lack of prominent female composers and said: 'I want to deny the assertion made by many men, philosophers and scientists that women are incapable of dealing intelligently with the abstract'.<sup>399</sup> Such assertions highlight the type of strong personality that was typical of women who forged successful careers as composers during this period.

Another composer regularly featured in the South Place programmes who was well known for her song writing was Frances Allitsen (1848 – 1912). Allitsen did not begin her training at GSM until she was in her 30s, following years of convincing her parents to allow her to be a musician.<sup>400</sup> Subsequently she worked as a singer, teacher and accompanist, but was most successful at composition and her songs were regularly performed at South Place, surprisingly, because she was best known for her patriotic and religious music. She published over 150 songs and wrote a few pieces for piano and chamber ensembles, as well as some orchestral music and one opera. In 1890 she accompanied C. Haydn Coffin at the South Place concerts, performing her own composition *Prince Ivan's Song*.<sup>401</sup> It was encored and they performed another song by Allitsen, although it is not recorded specifically what piece. *A Song of Thanksgiving* was particularly popular at the concerts, based on a religious poem by James Thompson.<sup>402</sup> In the first stanza, the poet describes love as 'the armour of the Lord and the banner of

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<sup>398</sup> Fuller, *The Pandora Guide to Women Composers*, 183 – 4.

<sup>399</sup> Lehmann, *The Life of Liza Lehmann, 1862 – 1918*, 160.

<sup>400</sup> Fuller, *The Pandora Guide to Women Composers*, 38.

<sup>401</sup> SPES: Concert Programme. 6<sup>th</sup> concert of the 5<sup>th</sup> season, 9 November 1890.

<sup>402</sup> Allitsen, Frances. *A Song of Thanksgiving*. London: Boosey & Co., 1891.

Heav'n', and the following three four-line stanzas end with thanks to God for 'life', 'love' and 'you'. This could be an indication that the South Place committee were not overly worried about whether the music at the Sunday concerts fitted the more secularist attitudes within the Society. However, it is noticeable that one of Allitsen's other most popular songs *The Lord is My Light*, does not appear once. It is possible that the *A Song of Thanksgiving* has enough of a focus on 'life', 'love' and resilience through music that audiences found it acceptable, whereas *The Lord is my Light*, being based on Psalm 27 and solely focused on God, was too heavily religious and therefore not suitable for the concerts.

Mary Carmichael (1851 – 1935) is another composer of the same generation who was best known for her songs. She studied harmony and counterpoint at the Royal Academy of Music with one of Swepstone's teachers, Ebenezer Prout, to whom she dedicated her first published song *Idyll* in 1874.<sup>403</sup> Carmichael's music featured at the South Place concerts from the beginning and was programmed consistently throughout the end of the century. The annotated programmes show that her songs were often encored, or sung as an encore, proving that her music was popular with the South Place audience. In the 1890s Carmichael started writing sacred music, but unsurprisingly these were not programmed at South Place. Instead, the concerts featured her songs set to old and new British and Irish poets, such as Burns, Byron, Austin Dobson and Samuel Lover. Among the most popular of Carmichael's original songs at South Place were *From the Red Rose* and *A May Song*.<sup>404</sup> She also became well known for reviving and publishing arrangements of old English, Scottish and Irish songs, which were also popular at South Place. Sometimes these were part of the special concerts, for example Carmichael's arrangements of *The Croppy Boy's Lament* and *Widow Machree* were both part of the St Patrick's Day Concert in 1919, although the Irish airs had previously been performed by Denis O'Sullivan, who had recorded the words and music of the old Cork street songs for Carmichael.<sup>405</sup> Other examples

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<sup>403</sup> Fuller, *The Pandora Guide to Women Composers*, 84 - 85.

<sup>404</sup> *From the Red Rose* was performed three times, twice by Louise Phillips (3<sup>rd</sup> concert of the 6<sup>th</sup> season and 2<sup>nd</sup> concert of the 8<sup>th</sup> season) and once by Agnes Witting (8<sup>th</sup> concert of the 12<sup>th</sup> season). *A May Song* was performed three times by Helen Trust (1<sup>st</sup> concert of the 4<sup>th</sup> season; 4<sup>th</sup> concert of the 8<sup>th</sup> season; and 1<sup>st</sup> concert of the 9<sup>th</sup> season). See SPES: Concert programmes.

<sup>405</sup> *Croppy Boy's Lament* and *Widow Machree*: SPES: Concert programmes: 7<sup>th</sup> concert of the 15<sup>th</sup> season, 18 November 1900; 4<sup>th</sup> concert of the 22<sup>nd</sup> season, 27 October 1907; *Croppy Boys Lament*: 7<sup>th</sup>

include an adaptation of the Scotch song *It's no in titles nor in rank* and Handel's *Come and trip it*. On occasion the songs were programmed alongside arrangements by Lucy Broadwood (1858 - 1929), who also collected and adapted old English folksongs that were often included in the South Place concerts.<sup>406</sup> Carmichael very much fit the role of British songwriter in her capacity at the South Place concerts. Rarely did she have any connection to the Austro-German tradition that was so prevalent elsewhere at South Place. Only once was one of her arrangements by a German composer programmed (*With Early Horn* by J. Ernest Galliard) and interestingly, the only time Carmichael herself performed at the concerts as an accompanist, she was part of a Schumann concert and performed five songs with Louise Phillips, including three from *Dichterliebe*.<sup>407</sup> Phillips also performed many of Carmichael's songs, indicating that they had a close professional relationship. This adds to the theory that musicians within the South Place community were keen to provide each other with opportunities and to use the concerts to promote one another's music.

As far as the programmes show, the Irish composer Alicia A. Needham (1872 – 1945) did not perform at the South Place concerts, but her songs were popular with the performers between 1896 and the early 1900s. Another student of Prout, her songs had a similar popularity to Carmichael's and are related in the sense that they are based on folk or traditional words and melodies, although in Needham's case the influences were purely Irish. Her music was often programmed in a set of Irish songs or as part of a special Irish concert, the most popular pieces being the *Irish Lullaby*, *The Donovans* (from an Old Irish Air *The Wind that Shakes the Barley*), *Maureen* and *Husheen*.<sup>408</sup> Needham also composed *4 Songs for Women Suffragists*, which were not

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concert of the 27<sup>th</sup> season, 17 November 1912; 23<sup>rd</sup> concert of the 33<sup>rd</sup> season, 16 March 1919 (St. Patrick's Day Irish Concert).

<sup>406</sup> SPES: Concert programmes: 25<sup>th</sup> concert of the 5<sup>th</sup> season, 22 March 1891; 21<sup>st</sup> concert of the 6<sup>th</sup> season, 21 February 1892; 19<sup>th</sup> concert of the 7<sup>th</sup> season, 12 February 1893; 6<sup>th</sup> concert of the 15<sup>th</sup> season, 11 November 1900; 11<sup>th</sup> concert of the 21<sup>st</sup> season, 16 December 1906; 4<sup>th</sup> concert of the 22<sup>nd</sup> season, 27 October 1907; 11<sup>th</sup> concert of the 29<sup>th</sup> season, 13 December 1914; 7<sup>th</sup> concert of the 33<sup>rd</sup> season, 17 November 1918; 6<sup>th</sup> concert of the 40<sup>th</sup> season, 8 November 1925.

<sup>407</sup> SPES: Concert programme. 24<sup>th</sup> concert of the 8<sup>th</sup> season, 18 March 1894.

<sup>408</sup> SPES: Concert programmes: 24<sup>th</sup> concert of the 10<sup>th</sup> season, 15 March 1896 and 17<sup>th</sup> concert of the 13<sup>th</sup> season, 29 January 1899 (*Irish Lullaby*); 16<sup>th</sup> concert of the 12<sup>th</sup> season, 23 January 1898 (*Who Carries the Gun*); 24<sup>th</sup> concert of the 12<sup>th</sup> season, 20 March 1898; 22<sup>nd</sup> concert of the 16<sup>th</sup> season, 16 March 1902; 21<sup>st</sup> concert of the 18<sup>th</sup> season, 13 March 1904; 24<sup>th</sup> concert of the 23<sup>rd</sup> season, 21 March 1909 (*The Donovans*); 4<sup>th</sup> concert of the 14<sup>th</sup> season, 22 October 1899 (*The red cross flag. Who's that*

performed at South Place, but confirm her support for the movement. Arrangements of Celtic songs by Charlotte Milligan Fox (1860 – 1916) and Marjory Kennedy-Fraser CBE (1857 – 1930) were also included in the programme.<sup>409</sup>

Through featuring arrangements of traditional music (a popular genre of the Victorian and Edwardian eras) as well as original songs and song-cycles by women of different nationalities, South Place presented a diverse range of songs by women composers in this period. As well as those already mentioned (White, Liza Lehmann, Amelia Lehmann, Troup and Allitsen) more original songs were featured by the following women: Hope Temple, Mary Wurm, K Cholditch-Smith, Amy Horrocks, Laura Lemon, Edith Dick, Florence Aylward, Florence Gilbert, Alice Chambers Bunten, Chaminade, Agathe Backer-Grondahl, Eva Dell'Acqua, Lady Dufferin, Amy Woodforde-Finden, Alice Mary Smith, Ellen Cowdell, Smyth, Kate Lee, Teresa Del Riego, Joan Trevalsa, Alice Bateman, Sybil Palliser, Ellen Wright, Ellen Cowdell, Amy Beach, Agnes Lambert, Dorothy Gandy, Evelyn Burrowes, Augusta Holmes, Adela Maddison, Poldowsky, Morfydd Owen and Elvira Gambogi. A few of these only appeared in the programmes as encore songs. Some particularly difficult to interpret handwriting also possibly indicates that a song by Lissie Walthew was performed at a concert in 1899, following a song by likely a relative of Richard Walthew. Clements' notes reveal he thought this was a 'very ordinary song' and her music was not included in future concerts, showing that high expectations were required even from those with close contacts within the organisation.

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calling); 23<sup>rd</sup> concert of the 14<sup>th</sup> season, 25 March 1900; 10<sup>th</sup> concert of the 15<sup>th</sup> season, 9 December 1900 (Maureen).

<sup>409</sup> SPES: Concert programmes: 15<sup>th</sup> concert of the 23<sup>rd</sup> season, 17 January 1909 (Three Irish folk songs arranged by C. Milligan Fox); 4<sup>th</sup> concert of the 32<sup>nd</sup> season, 28 October 1917 (Old Irish Air *Kelly's Cat* arranged by C. Milligan Fox); 11<sup>th</sup> concert of the 28<sup>th</sup> season, 14 December 1913 (Old Celtic Melody An Eriskay Lullaby arranged by Marjory Kennedy-Fraser); 2<sup>nd</sup> concert of the 30<sup>th</sup> season, 17 October 1915 (Songs of the Hebrides collected and arranged by Marjory Kennedy-Fraser); 17<sup>th</sup> concert of the 37<sup>th</sup> season, 4 February 1923 (Four Songs of the Cloth – Hebridean – by Cedar Paul arranged by Marjory Kennedy-Fraser).



### 6.3 Chamber music by women at South Place and the Concert of Women Composers

Among the chamber works, the more unusual pieces are those written for larger instrumental ensembles. Swebstone stands out as a notable contributor of instrumental works at South Place, receiving 13 performances of 11 different ensemble works between 1887 and 1920, nearly as many as the rest collectively. Most of Swebstone's works were also significantly longer than those by other women, except for Smyth's String Quartet in E Minor. Unlike Swebstone's music, it is relatively easy to find scores and recordings of Smyth's music today.

Although Smyth (1858 – 1944) achieved notable success in her day and is still a relatively well-known composer, her music featured comparatively little in the first forty years of South Place concerts, appearing on only three separate occasions. Most likely this is because the bulk of Smyth's chamber music output was written early in her career (around the 1880s), as opposed to her larger-scale works that were mostly written post-1900, at a time when she was more widely known. However, it does not appear that the South Place Orchestra paid much attention to her music either. The date of the first performance of Smyth's music at South Place is certainly significant. In 1910, aged 52, Smyth met Emmeline Pankhurst and quickly joined the WSPU. She soon became a prominent activist and was arrested in 1912 along with 147 other women for taking part in a mass riot in London. Smyth was jailed for throwing a rock through anti-suffragist Lewis Harcourt's window. A famous account by Thomas Beecham describes the scene of Smyth conducting her anthem 'The March of the Women' (composed by Smyth in 1910) with a toothbrush, whilst a crowd of suffragettes in the Holloway Prison yard sang. Such bold behaviour is just characteristic of Smyth's feisty attitude towards life, which certainly contributed towards her incredible success as a female composer around the turn of the century. 1910 was also the year that Smyth received her first honorary Doctorate of Music from Durham University, confirming that by this stage in her career she had been recognised as an important British composer.<sup>410</sup> Nevertheless, Smyth still felt it was often a struggle to get her compositions performed and this is noticeable in her absence from the earlier South Place programmes.

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<sup>410</sup> Fuller, Sophie. "Smyth, Dame Ethel (Mary)" in *Oxford Music Online*. Last modified 20 January 2001. Accessed July 2018.

Yet, on 20 November 1910, Smyth's name finally appears as the composer of a set of four songs: 'Odelette'; 'The Dance'; 'Chrysilla' and 'Anacreontic Ode'. The collection of songs took up 25 minutes of the programme and was performed by a South Place Concert regular and well known Scottish contralto, Mary Grainger Kerr (1864 – 1940s). It is very likely that Clements and the other concert organisers would have been well aware of Smyth as a composer and it is possible that her recent militant action drew her closer to their attention. Although the violence and militancy of the suffragettes was against the official stance of the Ethical Church, based on their 1913 manifesto, South Place was regularly out of sync with the other ethical societies, and the Society regularly gave suffragettes a platform to speak about a range of subjects.<sup>411</sup> Clearly the concert committee did not see Smyth's militancy as a problem. The fact that in 1910 Smyth announced her official break from music in order to fight for the vote suggests that the concert committee was supportive of her actions. This does not necessarily reflect the views of the rest of the Society, as the concert committee often programmed music that would not have been in line with other members' thinking. However, the regular discussions and debates between members about the relationship between music and ethics suggest that there would definitely have been some consideration over programming Smyth, a potentially controversial figure. As Elizabeth Jane Kertesz noted in her doctoral thesis on 'Issues in the critical reception of Ethel Smyth's Mass and first four operas in England and Germany', Smyth's feminism often affected the way she was treated by the press.<sup>412</sup> Introducing Smyth's music to the South Place audience at this time may have been the concert committee's way of contributing to the suffrage debate through their programming.

In December 1914, Dawson Freer performed the playful 'Anacreontic Ode' for a second time. He also performed three other songs by male British composers and a selection of British folk tunes – a seemingly patriotic selection during the early war years. Interestingly, Smyth was not programmed at all in the 1915 women composers' concert. It was not until 1925 that Smyth's name reappeared in the programme. Despite the infrequency of programming her music, this was another substantial work.

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<sup>411</sup> See Chapter 3.

<sup>412</sup> Kertesz, Elizabeth Jane. "Issues in the critical reception of Ethel Smyth's Mass and first four operas in England and Germany" (PhD diss., University of Melbourne: 2000), 181 – 199.

Smyth's E Minor String Quartet is a forty-minute work comprising four movements, each contrasting but filled with bold and energetic moments. Having started the work in 1902, Smyth abandoned it in favour of working on an opera, and did not complete the final two movements until ten years later. Harry Brewster, a man with whom she had a close relationship for many years, passed away shortly before her return to the piece, and the solemnity of the Andante could be interpreted as a reflection of her grief. The work has been analysed from a variety of perspectives. Notably, Elizabeth Wood viewed the work as a representation of the struggle for women's rights.<sup>413</sup> A common thread is that the music somehow represents an exploration of Smyth's identity and ability as a woman, which is particularly poignant in the example of her first published string quartet: for centuries this had been well-established as a male genre due to large outputs of high standard quartets by renowned composers such as Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert. Throughout her career, Ethel Smyth smashed through a number of glass ceilings facing women composers, particularly through her operatic work, and enjoyed wide success. The work is a great example of how Smyth challenged the expectations of women composers in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Although South Place did not programme much of Smyth's music, it is important that works such as the quartet were programmed in distinguished chamber music concerts such as the ones held at South Place. Smyth is also symbolic of the crossover between music and feminism that was so prominent at the Society.

Another chamber music work that stands out in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century programmes is Alice Verne-Bredt's Phantasie Trio (1908). Verne-Bredt turned to composition after an episode of typhoid halted her singing career, and despite not having any formal training her music was performed widely in London. Her ten-minute Phantasie Trio was particularly admired and awarded special recognition for the 1908 W. W. Cobbett chamber music competition.<sup>414</sup> A large part of Seddon's book on twentieth-century women composers focuses on the Phantasy as a genre that offered British women composers a new space that had not already been dominated by their male peers, and thus gave them the opportunity to experiment with their style, especially as

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<sup>413</sup> Wood, Elizabeth. "Performing Rights: A Sonography of Women's Suffrage". *Musical Quarterly*, 79 (1995): 624 – 5, 630.

<sup>414</sup> Seddon, *British Women Composers and Instrumental Chamber Music*, 133.

phantasies were inherently less structurally constrained than other chamber music genres. Conversely, Verne-Bredt's piece does show a clear structure and contains an unusual amount of repetition for a Phantasy, but the music retains surprising elements through the transitions of time signature, tempo and key. The opening theme in 5/4 adds to the feeling of freedom and its dramatic sound becomes much more lyrical when the melody returns in 3/4 in the middle of the piece. Playful sections intersect the darker qualities of the original theme, which comes back at the end of the work in its original key. Like many of the South Place women musicians, Verne-Bredt came from a musical family, and her sister Mathilde Verne was involved in the performance of the work at South Place in 1910, alongside John Saunders and Charles A. Crabbe. This was the only occasion in which the work was performed at South Place, but not the only Phantasy piece. Some British men also wrote Phantasies that were performed at South Place, including Dunhill's Phantasy Trio in E $\flat$ , Op. 36.<sup>415</sup> Seddon shows that whilst internationally successful female composers did not tend to have engaged in Phantasy writing (such as Smyth and Adela Maddison), those in London circles often produced many. Swepstone appears to fit somewhat within those London circles, and did also compose a Phantasy Trio, which received its first public performance at South Place as the opening work of the concert of women composers in 1915.

Swepstone's Phantasy Trio in D Minor ("*Como Bells*") was a 12 minute work also performed at the women's concert by the Chaplin Trio. As the back of the programme is missing, any longer notes that may have been available cannot be referenced here, but a short annotation on the front reveals something about the structure and conception of the work. The tempo markings are listed as such: Molto Moderato – Andante – Agitato – Lento – Allegretto giojoso – Andante – Molto Moderato – Allegro. Swepstone writes:

On the banks of Como, I climbed a little hill so overgrown with trees, that the rest of the world was shut out. Suddenly, the intense stillness of the leafy twilight was broken by the joyous sound of bells ringing from a campanile far up the mountain side. Then and there I jotted down on the fly-leaf of Baedeker the little bell-tune which appears in the latter part of

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<sup>415</sup> SPES: Concert Programme. 25<sup>th</sup> concert of the 33<sup>rd</sup> season, 30 March 1919.

this Phantasy, at the section marked Allegro giojoso.<sup>416</sup>

The fact that Swebstone refers to the Allegro giojoso as the 'latter section' implies that despite a vaguely mirrored list of tempo markings, the return to Andante and Molto Moderato may have only been short returns to their original themes before the Allegro provided a possibly surprising ending – something that Swebstone does in other works such as *Spectral Hunt*, which has a very abrupt and light ending in comparison to the rest of the piece. One can imagine that by incorporating the sound of the bells in the Phantasy, Swebstone was attempting through this piece to recreate the atmosphere of her experience by Lake Como (Lombardy, Italy), and the phantasy form allowed her to express the sense of freedom she had whilst exploring on her own and being able to 'shut the world out'.

The instrumental pieces in the concert were interspersed with songs, as was the usual format. Following Swebstone's phantasy, Margaret Wild sung *When Myra Sings* by Amelia Lehmann, *How do I love thee* by White, and *Unless* by Troup. This was followed by Dorothea Crompton performing: *O Years and Age*, Farewell by Evelyn Burrowes, 'I sometimes think' from Lehmann's *In a Persian Garden*, and *Last Year* and *The Bonny Curl*, also by White. Later, both singers performed Alice Mary Smith's vocal duet *Maying* together. After the interval Wild returned to sing: *Le Ruban Rose* by Augusta Holmès, *Lovers in the Lane* by Lehmann and Agnes Lambert's version of *The Throstle*.

The second instrumental piece included on the front of the concert of women composers programme, was Agnes Zimmermann's Sonata in D Minor, Op. 16 for Piano and Violin. Zimmermann (1867 – 1925) was born in Germany, but moved to London as a young child. She was considered an exceptional pianist in London, where her compositions were also regularly performed, but had a limited influence elsewhere.<sup>417</sup> In 1900 she gradually moved away from her public career, and by the time South Place got around to programming her music in 1913 she was rarely performing. The Sonata was performed by two of the Chaplin sisters, and was the longest piece in the

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<sup>416</sup> SPES: Concert Programme. 16<sup>th</sup> concert of the 29<sup>th</sup> season, 24 January 1915. (Baedeker was a German travel guide).

<sup>417</sup> Wenzel, Silke. "Agnes Zimmermann" Accessed September 2018.

[http://mugi.hfmt-hamburg.de/old/A\\_lexartikel/lexartikel.php?id=zimm1847](http://mugi.hfmt-hamburg.de/old/A_lexartikel/lexartikel.php?id=zimm1847)

programme (29 minutes), which usually would have been placed at the beginning or end of the concert but for some reason was placed in the middle. Swepstone's Phantasy was the first piece in the programme, perhaps with the intention of opening the concert with music by a friend of the concerts. Like Swepstone, Zimmermann also wrote orchestral music and chamber music for wind ensembles.<sup>418</sup> The Royal Academy of Music has preserved some of Zimmermann's work, but unfortunately her Op.16 Sonata is not among them, and has not turned up elsewhere.

So far, most of the women mentioned have been London-based British women, including Zimmermann who only went back to Germany to perform. Chaminade was one female composer from Europe who had many compositions featured in the South Place programmes from 1893 until 1918. Mostly, these were songs: 'The Silver Ring' and 'L'Été' were particularly popular, the latter was described as 'a refreshing song' by Clements in his notes. Her Piano Trio in A Minor was the last work in the women composers' concert, the only time one of her instrumental ensemble pieces was programmed.<sup>419</sup> Another European composer whose works were programmed often was Agathe Backer Grøndahl (1847 – 1907).<sup>420</sup> Josephine Troup performed two of the Norwegian composer's piano works during the 1890s, with *Norwegische Tanz-Caprice* proving to be popular with the audience. Backer Grøndahl wrote nearly 200 songs during her career and approximately 120 piano pieces. Her song 'An meines Herzens Königin' ('To the Queen of my Heart') was sung twice, the second time as part of a Scandinavian concert.<sup>421</sup> It was not until the composer's son, Fridtjof Backer Grøndahl (1885 – 1959), came to London in the 1920s that any more of her piano works were performed (see Table 4).

Other chamber music pieces by women during this period may have been shorter works and for duets or solo instruments, but that takes nothing away from their importance and quality. In 1896, a short piece for piano and cello by Amy Grimson

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<sup>418</sup> For example, Zimmermann's Quintet in E♭ Major for flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon & piano. Available from: RAM: Zimmermann manuscripts, Vol. 2, MS1610.

<sup>419</sup> The back of the programme is missing but the Trio is listed in the annual report as having been in the programme and it is likely to have ended the concert.

<sup>420</sup> Grinde, Nils. "Backer Grøndahl, Agathe" in *Oxford Music Online*. Last modified 20 January 2001. Accessed July 2019.

<sup>421</sup> SPES: Concert programmes. 5<sup>th</sup> concert of the 4<sup>th</sup> season, 3 November 1889; 1<sup>st</sup> concert of the 26<sup>th</sup> season, 1 October 1911.

(1872 – 1935), *Canzona*, was performed by the composer (cello) and Annie Grimson (piano). Along with her siblings, Amy Grimson proved herself to have high musical potential from a young age. She won a scholarship to RCM aged 14 to study cello and whilst she was there, was awarded a Hopkinson Gold Medal. Several of her compositions were published, yet only *Canzona* was performed at South Place, two years prior to its publication date in 1898. Interestingly, this piece was published by Charles Woodhouse, who would later become a member of Jessie Grimson's Quartet. Annie and Amy Grimson executed the work, alongside works by Liszt, Chopin, Mendelssohn and Dvorak. The music is filled with the nineteenth-century romanticism of their performance repertoire. As suggested by its name, *Canzona* is a lyrical piece with an extremely expressive cello part. The performer is instructed at various moments to play with spirit, agitation (bars 57, 59 and 73 in Example 1) and mystery (b. 61, Example 1), giving a narrative sense to the music. Ad lib passages also allow an element of freedom for a proficient cellist such as the composer was herself (b. 64 in Example 1). The piano accompaniment shines in the moments where the cello is absent, stealing some of the melodic fragments and playing them over luscious, full chords that develop through triplets and offbeat rhythms. Example 2 shows where the opening theme of the cello in bars 8 and 9 reappears in the first piano interruption in bars 15 and 16. Whilst in some ways it could be regarded as a typically 'feminine' piece of music, in the sense that the music, particularly the piano part, is lyrical and delicate, the music also moves through a range of keys and moods in a short amount of time, creating a lot of unexpected turns and drama, and at points, darkness and power.<sup>422</sup>

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<sup>422</sup> Grimson, Amy. *Canzona for Violincello and Pianoforte*. London: C. Woodhouse, 1898. British Library: Music Collections: h.204.e.(12.)

Example 1 - Grimson's Canzona (cello), bars 57 – 74

*agitato* *sf* *piu agitato*

*mysterioso* *sf* *pp* *cresc.* *cresc.*

*ad - lib - e - agitato* *f* *ff* *sf* *pp* *mf* *a tempo*

*agitato e accel.* *pp*

15 *agitato e accel.* *pp*



Example 2 - Grimson's Canzona, bars 1 – 19

**CANZONA.**

1

Andante e sostenuto. (M. M.  $\text{♩} = 60$ ).

Amy Grimson.

Violoncello.

Piano.

*mf* *cresc.* *sf*

*8va Red.* *Red. \** *Red.*

*poco rit.* *a tempo* *mf* *espress.*

*poco rit.* *a tempo* *sempre p e dolce*

*col 8va*

*cresc.* *f* *a tempo* *un poco rit.* *a tempo* *3* *3* *pp* *sostenuto*

*f* *un poco rit.* *mf* *espress.*

*col 8va* *Red.* *\**

*dolce*

*legato* *mf* *p*

*mf* *Red.*

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It is unclear how much more music Amy Grimson wrote. Only two more works by her exist at the British Library: Nocturne for Piano and Cello and three pieces for beginners of cello or violin with piano accompaniment, consisting of 'Waltz', 'March' and 'Slumber Song'.<sup>423</sup> None of her music appears to have been performed widely, at least in London where she was based, but her career as a performer continued after the whole family stopped performing together. Even in the 1890s, Amy Grimson had her own ventures. She was a member of Reverend E. H. Moberly's Ladies' String Orchestra, who performed traditional and contemporary music (by composers such as Dvorak, Svendsen and Glazunov). The orchestra had a good critical reception, but was often remarked on with gendered terms, referring to the 'masculine vigour' and 'power of tone' that was often said to be lacking from female performers.<sup>424</sup> Musicologist and feminist Marion Scott was also a member of the orchestra.<sup>425</sup> Amy Grimson was also a member of an all-female string quartet with Winifred Holiday, Amsbel Marshall and Alice Hunt called the Karl Nawratils String Quartet.<sup>426</sup> Although they were not as successful as Jessie Grimson's quartet, reports of their abilities were still very positive.<sup>427</sup> She also performed as a soloist for private concerts, such as performing a Brahms sonata in Lord Erskine and Archdeacon Jennings' music room for a group of connoisseurs.<sup>428</sup> Especially during World War One, when many of the regular male performers had signed up for war, Amy performed at South Place more regularly on her own. She also often took a place in her sister Jessie's quartet, as did Robert on occasion.

Amy Grimson had performed other music at South Place prior to having her own composition performed there. The same goes for the violist Rebecca Clarke (1886 – 1979), now best known for her chamber music featuring the viola. Outside of South Place, Clarke performed with other South Place women, including Myra Hess, Marjorie Hayward and May Mukle, hinting that the close networking apparent among the South

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<sup>423</sup> Grimson, Amy. Nocturne for Piano and Cello. London: Augener & Co, 1892. British Library: Music Collections: h.204.e.(11.); Grimson, Amy. Three pieces for beginners of cello or violin with piano accompaniment. London: Weekes & Co, 1906. British Library: 004378734

<sup>424</sup> Blevins, Pamela and Gurney, Ivor and Scott, Marion. *Song of Pain and Beauty*. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2008; also see: "Mr Moberley's String Orchestra." *The Monthly Musical Record* 23, no. 270 (June 1893): 135.

<sup>425</sup> Gillett, *Musical Women in England, 1870 – 1914*, 115.

<sup>426</sup> Karl Nawratils (1836 – 1914) was a composer and pianist from Vienna.

<sup>427</sup> *The Times* (February 28 1902), 5.

<sup>428</sup> Bartley, *Far from the Fashionable Crowd*, 170.

Place musicians played a role in her career. She was also part of the Society of Women Musicians' community, having attended the inaugural meeting.<sup>429</sup> By the time Clarke first performed at South Place she was already a successful musician, notably having been selected as one of the first women to play in Henry Wood's Queen's Hall Orchestra in 1912, along with Jessie Grimson. In 1915, Clarke performed in a French Concert with M. Désiré Defauw, R. Kay, La Prade Lagrillière, (strings) Jongen (piano), Guy Weitz (organ) and Fernande Pironnay (vocalist), featuring music by Chausson, Saint-Saëns and Debussy.<sup>430</sup> Later that season she was a last-minute replacement for Lionel Tertis, when she played the viola obbligato in two songs song by Brahms and joined Evelyn Suart and Murial Donne to perform G. Jense's *Phantastiestucke* Trio Op. 27.<sup>431</sup> Later that year Clarke performed at South Place again, this time as part of a quartet giving Chausson's Concerto in D Major, Op. 21, along with Marcel Laoureux, who was a pianist to the Belgian Court, and MM. Desire Defauw, a Belgian violinist and conductor.<sup>432</sup> The singer in the concert was M. A. Coryn, director of the Royal Opera, Antwerp. Whilst this was not another concert raising money to support refugees, it was clearly an effort to show support to Belgium during the war.

The following season Clarke returned as part of a string quartet, shortly before her move to the US. It was not until a couple of years later that her own compositions were performed, although not by Clarke herself, who left the UK in 1916 for a prolonged stay in America and a world tour. She was not forgotten at South Place in her absence. In February 1919, as part of an Opus 1 concert, Clarke's songs *He wished for the Cloths of Heaven* and *Shy One* were sung by Beatrice Spencer.<sup>433</sup> These songs were the first of Clarke's to become well known, and despite being written in 1912, they were still considered by many to be too modern when they were published in 1920.<sup>434</sup> In that sense, South Place were also quite slow to programme these avant-garde works by a woman composer, considering their reputation for the promotion of challenging contemporary music. However, at this concert they were programmed alongside other modern songs by Ernest Walker, Henry Ley, Thomas Dunhill and

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<sup>429</sup> Fuller, *The Pandora Guide to Women Composers*, 89 – 92.

<sup>430</sup> SPES: Concert programme. 15<sup>th</sup> concert of the 29<sup>th</sup> season, 17 January 1915.

<sup>431</sup> SPES: Concert programme. 23<sup>rd</sup> concert of the 29<sup>th</sup> season, 14 March 1915.

<sup>432</sup> SPES: Concert programme. 2<sup>nd</sup> concert of the 30<sup>th</sup> season, 10 October 1915.

<sup>433</sup> SPES: Concert programme. 17<sup>th</sup> concert of the 33<sup>rd</sup> season, 2 February 1919.

<sup>434</sup> Fuller, *The Pandora Guide to Women Composers*, 89.

Charles Villiers Stanford. Only one of Clarke's string pieces was performed at South Place in 1919.<sup>435</sup> Later that year, Margery and Thelma Bentwich performed the 'Lullaby' from Clarke's duet for strings (viola and cello), which had originally been written for Clarke to play with May Mukle in 1918.<sup>436</sup> Upon her return to London, Clarke appeared at the concerts again in 1926 with The Aeolian Players (Clarke, Constance Izard, Joseph Slater and Gordon Bryan), playing Bach, Bax and selection of songs.<sup>437</sup> The same season, her song *The Seal Man* was performed by John Goss,<sup>438</sup> and *Three Old English Songs* arranged for voice and violin by Clarke were given by Osmond Davis and Charles Woodhouse.<sup>439</sup> When she returned in the forty-seventh season to perform, Dorothea Webb gave another performance of *The Seal Man*.<sup>440</sup> It seems that Clarke's long term association and recurrent performances at South Place directly led to increased exposure of her own works at the concerts, even though she was rarely involved with their performance. Such a relationship will also be seen through the careers of Swebstone and Troup, whose work for the committee led to more performances of their works. Whether this was because the women were able to have more influence in the decision-making process, or it was an acknowledgement from the committee, remains unclear.

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<sup>435</sup> SPES: Concert programme. 17<sup>th</sup> concert of the 33<sup>rd</sup> season, 2 February 1919.

<sup>436</sup> SPES: Concert programme. 22<sup>nd</sup> concert of the 33<sup>rd</sup> season, 9 March 1919.

<sup>437</sup> SPES: Concert programme. 15<sup>th</sup> concert of the 40<sup>th</sup> season, 17 January 1926.

<sup>438</sup> SPES: Concert programme. 9<sup>th</sup> concert of the 40<sup>th</sup> season, 29 November 1925.

<sup>439</sup> SPES: Concert programme. 19<sup>th</sup> concert of the 40<sup>th</sup> season, 14 February 1926.

<sup>440</sup> SPES/7/1/18: South Place Sunday Popular Concert Committee Annual Reports (SPSPC): 1932 – 3.



**PRICE ONE PENNY.**

**SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY.**

**SOUTH PLACE SUNDAY POPULAR CONCERTS**

**SECOND CONCERT OF THE THIRTIETH SEASON**  
(THE 689TH CONCERT)

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 10th, 1915, at 7 p.m. DOORS OPEN at 6.30.

Violins ... MM. DESIRE DEFAUW, R. KAY, ERNEST LA PRADE.  
Viola ... Miss REBECCA CLARKE. Violoncello ... M. M. LAGRILLIERE.  
Piano ... M. MARCEL LAOUREUX (Pianist to the Belgian Court).  
Vocalist ... M. A. CORYN (Director of the Royal Opera, Antwerp).  
Accompanist ... Miss ETHEL ATTWOOD.

**Programme and Words of the Songs.**

1. SONATA IN A, for Pianoforte and Violin ... César Franck (1822-1890).  
(Seventh time at these Concerts).  
i. Allegretto ben moderato. ii. Allegro. iii. Recitativo—Fantasia: Ben moderato. iv. Allegretto poco mosso.  
M. MARCEL LAOUREUX AND M. DÉSIRÉ DEFAUW.

2. SONGS ... (a) Ariette } Anacréon ... Grétry (1741-1813).  
... (b) Chanson Bachique }  
M. A. CORYN. *Encore: "En Route" Charles René*  
(a) ARIETTE.  
De ma barque légère agréez le secours,  
Et cherchons pour vos jours une plus digne terre.  
Mais laissons les soupirs sur ce fâcheux rivage,  
N'admettons au voyage que les plaisirs.  
Et que les dieux propices admirent, dans son  
cours, l'amour.  
L'hymen sous les auspices d'Anacréon et des  
(b) CHANSON BACHIQUE.  
Laisse en paix le dieu des combats,  
Qu'a silène il cède le pas;  
Et si tout bas l'orgueil en gronde  
Que la voix tout haut lui réponde!  
Eh, pourquoi ne boirais-je pas,  
Tandis que tout boit dans le monde.  
Les ondes boivent l'air,  
Le soleil boit la mer,  
La terre boit la pluie,  
Dans son sein entr'ouvert,  
La plante boit la vie,  
Pourquoi ne boirais-je pas?

3. PIANOFORTE SOLO ... Prelude, Choral, and Fugue ... César Franck.  
(Second time at these Concerts).  
i. Moderato. ii. Poco più lento. iii. Poco Allegro.  
M. MARCEL LAOUREUX.

**INTERVAL FOR COLLECTION TO MEET EXPENSES.**

4. SONGS ... (a) Clair de Lune } G. Fauré (b. 1845).  
... (b) Les Berceaux }  
M. A. CORYN.  
(a) CLAIR DE LUNE.  
Votre âme est un paysage choisi que vont,  
Charmant masques et bergamasques  
Jouant du luth et dansant et quasi  
Tristes sous leurs déguisements fantasques!  
Tout en chantant sur le mode mineur  
L'amour vainqueur et la vie opportune,  
Ils n'ont pas l'air de croire à leur bonheur,  
Et leur chanson se mêle au clair de lune!  
Au calme clair de lune triste et beau,  
Qui fait rêver les oiseaux dans les arbres,  
Et sangloter d'extase les jets d'eau,  
Les grands jets d'eau sveltes parmi les marbres!  
(b) LES BERCEAUX.  
Le long du quai, les grands vaisseaux,  
Que la houle incline en silence,  
Ne prennent pas garde aux berceaux,  
Que la main des femmes balance.  
Mais viendra le jour des adieux,  
Car il faut que les femmes pleurent,  
Et que les hommes curieux  
Tendent les horizons qui leur rent!  
Et ce jour là les grands vaisseaux,  
Fuyant le port qui diminue,  
Sentent leur masse retenue,  
Par l'âme des lointains berceaux,  
*Encore: "L'Heure Sagesse" Pasquale Hahn*

5. CONCERTO IN D MAJOR, Op. 21, for Pianoforte Solo, Violin Solo, and String Quartet ... Ernest Chausson.  
(Second time at these Concerts).  
i. Decidé—Animé. ii. Sicilienne. iii. Grave. iv. Très animé—Très vif.  
Solo Pianoforte: M. MARCEL LAOUREUX. Solo Violin: M. DÉSIRÉ DEFAUW.  
String Quartet: M. R. KAY, M. ERNEST LA PRADE, Miss REBECCA CLARKE, AND M. M. LAGRILLIERE.

<sup>441</sup> SPES: Concert programme. 2<sup>nd</sup> concert of the 13<sup>th</sup> season, 10 October 1915.

#### 6.4 Performers at South Place (1887 – 1927)

Over the forty-year span of the first one thousand concerts, a huge number of performers were engaged by the South Place committee, some appearing only once whilst others sustained careers there over several decades. In the first few years, some women performed whose loyalty to the concerts continued for significant periods of time. For example, in the first year of concerts led by South Place, the Chaplin Trio, formed of sisters Nellie, Mabel and Kate Chaplin, made their first appearance of what was to be many. As Simon McVeigh has discovered, Mabel Chaplin briefly noted their appearance at the South Place Concerts in her diary, listing other performances at the time in Hanley and at the Prince of Wales Club (a venue that she thought to be ‘very common’).<sup>442</sup> Yet South Place was more than just a brief note in the Chaplin sisters’ musical careers; their association with the concerts lasted for nearly 30 years. Ironically, their involvement in the Women Composers’ Concert in the 29<sup>th</sup> season appears to have been their final performance there. However, for many years the trio performed a wide range of music. An example of one concert included music by Mendelssohn, Chopin, Guido Papini (1847 – 1912) and Eduard Schütt (1856 – 1933). In 1907, they also introduced Concerts of Ancient Music to South Place, a concept that they brought to other UK venues, often accompanied by dance. The first of this kind at South Place included music by Daquin, Corelli, Handel and Purcell, and was performed by an entirely female ensemble, including Leila Bull on the oboe. The concerts took on special educational value, as the women gave descriptions of their instruments (such as a harpsichord, a Viol d’Amore and a Viol da Gamba), which may have been a new experience for many in the South Place audience.<sup>443</sup> On such occasions, the sisters took on the roles of educators, performers and organisers, and were paid sufficiently for their work. Judging by the recalls and encores they received, the women were also respected by their audience.

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<sup>442</sup> McVeigh, “Building a Concert Career in Edwardian London,” 212.

<sup>443</sup> SPES: Concert programmes: 14<sup>th</sup> concert of the 21<sup>st</sup> season, 20 January 1907 (seven performers, all women); 19<sup>th</sup> concert of the 23<sup>rd</sup> season, 14 February 1909.



encore last two verses

Over the years, the Chaplins performed alongside many other friends of the South Place concerts, including Jessie Grimson in the seventeenth season. Other regular South Place performers who were there in the first few years include Cecilia Gates, Troup (pianists), Keatinge (singer as well as a concert committee member), Helen Trust, Marian McKenzie, Clara Leighton and Clara Robson (singers). Dorothea Walenn (violinist) and Kate Ould (cellist) were also regular performers from quite early on, and both were relatives of men who were also musicians at South Place, but subsequently played independently from them. Kate Augusta Davies and Minnie Sumner (also a SPSPC committee member), whose time at GSM coincided with Swepstone's, also made early appearances in the concerts. Davies was one of the most regular accompanists during the first 500 concerts, but sadly caught typhoid in 1908, age 36. The annual report of the twenty second season acknowledged her fifteen years of service to the concerts, and described her as an 'able and reliable' accompanist.<sup>445</sup>

In 1889, Kate Ralph (1850 – 1937) also appeared as a pianist for the first time.<sup>446</sup> Little is known about Kate Ralph and her compositions are rarely evident elsewhere in London concert programmes. In her debut performance at South Place, Ralph performed in a quartet with Arthur, Gerald and Herbert Walenn, and as a soloist performed Chopin's Ballade in A♭, Op.4. Later in the programme, Gerald Walenn played Moszkowski's 'Ballade' violin solo, and it is unclear whether he was accompanied by the concert's official accompanist, Charles Imhof, or Ralph. However, the audience having demanded an encore, Walenn performed an unnamed piece composed by Ralph. This makes Ralph the first woman to have an instrumental composition performed at the South Place concerts, even though it had not been officially set by the concert committee. Clearly this in no way upset the committee, as she was asked back to perform many times. She performed three times the following season. The second time, she performed two piano solos: Valse in A♭ by Chopin, and her own Air with Variations in F ♯ Minor, which got a recall from the audience.<sup>447</sup> During the last concert of the season, Ralph performed again in a quartet with the

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<sup>445</sup> SPES/7/1/15: South Place Sunday Popular Concert Committee Annual Reports (SPSPC): 1908 - 9.

<sup>446</sup> Her own first name is currently unknown, as she was another musician listed in every programme by her husband's name.

<sup>447</sup> SPES: Concert programme. 14<sup>th</sup> concert of the 5<sup>th</sup> season, 4 January 1891.



Walenns and a piano solo by Thalberg.<sup>448</sup> In the same concert, Gerald Walenn performed two violin solos written by Ralph called *Abendlied* and *Tarantella*, which were accompanied by the composer. Ralph continued to perform at a few concerts each season for several years, often including her compositions.<sup>449</sup> Her appearance during the ninth season appears to have been her last, when she repeated her *Air with Variations*.<sup>450</sup> Ralph clearly saw South Place as an opportunity for work as well as self-promotion. She was bold in taking extra opportunities through encores and, for a while at least, the musicians at South Place were happy to support her efforts.

In a similar vein, the composer and pianist Freda Swain first appeared at the South Place concerts in 1922 as an accompanist for the singer Helena Hughes.<sup>451</sup> The following season, Swain reappeared as accompanist for George Parker, but this time with a performance of one of her own songs, *When I am Lost*, as well as others by Arthur Alexander, Martin Shaw and Hugo Wolf. The year after, Swain came back to perform with the Freda Swain Pianoforte Quartet, leading Marie Wilson, Honor Rendall and Marjorie Edes, to perform Faure's G Minor Quartet (Op. 45) and Percy Grainger's more recent *Handel in the Strand*. After a one-year break from South Place (during which Swain was appointed a Professor at Royal College of Music), Swain returned in the 40<sup>th</sup> season to perform trios by Mozart and Paul Juon with Lena Kontorovitch and Theodor Otscharkoff.<sup>452</sup> Swain's colleagues also then went on to perform two unaccompanied duets for violin and cello composed by Swain: 'Chanson Pastorale' and 'Danse Barbare'. This was followed by Swain performing two piano solos: Tchaikowsky's *Doumka* Op. 59 and Swain's own composition *West Wind*. For each of Swain's pieces in this concert, it was the first public performance. Thus, in the same way that Kate Ralph's performances led to her own works being performed at the concerts, Freda Swain's performances of other composers' works led to premieres at South Place of both songs and instrumental pieces. Sadly, like Swepstone, many of

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<sup>448</sup> SPES: Concert programme. 25<sup>th</sup> concert of the 5<sup>th</sup> season, 22 March 1891.

<sup>449</sup> For example during the eighth season she gave a second performance of *Abendlied* and a Gallop. SPES: Concert programme. 1<sup>st</sup> concert of the 8<sup>th</sup> season, 1 October 1893; SPES: Concert programme. 20<sup>th</sup> concert of the 8<sup>th</sup> season, 18 February 1894.

<sup>450</sup> SPES: Concert programme. 3<sup>rd</sup> concert of the 9<sup>th</sup> season, 21 October 1894.

<sup>451</sup> SPES: Concert programme. 20<sup>th</sup> concert of the 36<sup>th</sup> season, 19 February 1922.

<sup>452</sup> Eric & Foreman, Lewis, "Swain, Freda" in Sadie, Julie Anne and Samuel, Rhian. *The New Grove Dictionary of Women Composers*. Reprint. London: The Macmillan Press Limited, 1995; SPES: Concert programme. 2<sup>nd</sup> concert of the 40<sup>th</sup> season, 11 October 1925.

Swain's instrumental works have somehow been lost. Swain's association with the concerts lasted until the late 1930s, when she still performed and had songs performed by others. It is possible that her attention was drawn away from South Place in the late '30s and '40s when she founded the British Music Movement and the NEMO concerts, which promoted new music of her own and her contemporaries. With such interests, it is clear to see why the South Place concerts appealed to her in earlier years.

A few years prior to Swain's period of activity, during the 31<sup>st</sup> season, Myra Hess (1890 – 1965, later to become Dame Myra Hess) made her debut performance at South Place. By this point Hess already had a well-established career in London, and the South Place committee were pleased to have her return to play several times, commenting: 'our appreciation of her piano playing grows from year to year'.<sup>453</sup> Potentially one of the biggest contributions Hess made to the concerts was the Ladies' Evening that she organised during the 35<sup>th</sup> season. Hess successfully performed four sonatas by Scarlatti, a Prelude and Fugue by Bach, Schumann's 'Carnaval' and Franck's Quintet, with her colleagues Winifred Smith, Jessie Stewart, Dorothy Jones and Edith Lake.

The South Place committee were very selective in the choice of their performers; whether they were paying them or not, they expected them to be top quality musicians. In some cases the musicians performed for free. This may have been a problematic approach towards musicians who are struggling to make their careers work – wealthier musicians would be able to undercut musicians who needed the money to live. As McVeigh has described through reading early twentieth-century interviews with violinist Maud Powell, many women faced the struggle of making their way through a career as a violinist financially, because competition was so high.<sup>454</sup> Yet, in the case of Myra Hess, the financial records show that she was paid equally in comparison to the men at South Place. For example, for the concert on 17 December 1916, Myra Hess (piano), Margery Bentwich (violin), Thelma Bentwich (cello) and

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<sup>453</sup> SPES/7/1/16: South Place Sunday Popular Concert Committee Annual Reports (SPSPC): 1918 – 9.

More information about Hess's career in McVeigh, "Building a Concert Career in Edwardian London".

<sup>454</sup> McVeigh, "'As the Sand on the Sea Shore': Women Violinists in London's Concert Life around 1900," 247.

Frederick Ranalow (vocalist) were each paid the usual sum of £1 1s., whilst George Reeves (a last-minute replacement for G. O'Connor Morris) was paid 10s. 6d. – the normal fee for an accompanist. As an ensemble the women performed Brahms' Trio in C Minor (Op. 101) and Frank Bridge's Phantasie in C Minor. Hess and Thelma Bentwich both performed a solo and Ranalow performed six songs. Thus, the work was fairly equal, and the women were equally paid – a pioneering endeavour from the committee.

Another respected pianist who performed regularly at South Place between 1903 and 1926 was Evelyn Suart (1881 – 1950, also known as Lady Harcourt). She was known for being president of the Society of Women Musicians (SWM) between 1930 and 1932. Another member of the SWM was May Mukle (1880 – 1963), one of the most consistent and prolific performers at South Place. She was the cellist in many ensembles and in later years formed the Mukle-Langley quartet, with the primary motivation of performing at the Thursday 12 O' Clock's concert set up in 1907, but the quartet also often performed at South Place.<sup>455</sup> As well as being a member of the SWM, Mukle was a proud feminist and would have fitted effortlessly among sympathetic circles at South Place. Her friend and noted poet Anna Wickham described her: 'May, was early, a rabid feminist. She had had a devil of a time establishing herself against male prejudice, while making her way with an instrument considered unfeminine. She had no opinion on marriage, an attitude I did not share with her. She said "men would destroy and betray me"'.<sup>456</sup> Mukle was involved in the suffrage campaign, and the political edge of the South Place concerts may have been part of the reason she chose to perform there for many years, from the early 1900s until several years after World War Two.

As well as in the standard chamber music concerts, Mukle also performed several times with the South Place orchestra. As many of the orchestral concerts are missing it is difficult to say how many exactly and in what context, but in 1926 Mukle performed as the soloist in Brahms' Double Concerto in A Minor (Op. 102) alongside Margery

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<sup>455</sup> McVeigh, "Building a Concert Career in Edwardian London," 216.

<sup>456</sup> Seddon, Laura. "Wood's women: The Henry Wood Proms and the woman composer, 1910 – 20." Proms Conference 2007: British Library, 23 April 2007. Available to listen at the BL: C927/879 BD5.

Bentwich as the solo violinist.<sup>457</sup> Within the rest of the orchestra, Charles Woodhouse (from the Jessie Grimson String Quartet) was principal violinist, but the violin section was fairly evenly split in terms of gender. The rest of the orchestra, however, reflected most other orchestras and mainly consisted of men. Some of these men were also regulars in the South Place concerts, including violist Ernest Yonge, and two members of the Hawkins family who as a whole sustained a long association with all areas of the South Place community. Claude Hobday was one of the double bass players, who played in the chamber concerts but was also the brother-in-law of Ethel Hobday, another fairly prominent woman among the South Place performers, appearing 23 times in the later years of the first 1000 concerts and occasionally alongside Jessie Grimson. Throughout the rest of the orchestra that year, the only other women musicians were the flautist M. Dawson, and even more unusually, D. Nutting making up the entire percussion section.<sup>458</sup>

Another prolific string player who performed at South Place on several occasions was Henry J Wood, esteemed conductor of the Proms, who would later hire Grimson as a violinist for his orchestra. It is possible that their encounters at South Place were a key influencer in making this happen. Wood's wife, Princess Olga Ourousoff (but referred to as Mrs Henry J. Wood) also sang 11 times at the concerts over a six-year period, and was often complimented by the committee. When she died in 1909, the committee described her as a 'generous and gracious' woman, and counted her among the best friends and most kindly helpers of the concerts.<sup>459</sup> It is unclear from the archive exactly what she did for the concerts, and in the same respect it highlights that Grimson probably did more for the concerts than can be ascertained from the surviving written documentation.

Marjorie Hayward is another string player who built up a long association with South Place and had a connection to Grimson. Hayward studied violin with Grimson and Sauret and spent a couple of years studying with the respected teacher Sevcik in

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<sup>457</sup> SPES: Concert programme. 25<sup>th</sup> concert of the 40<sup>th</sup> season, 28 March 1926 (36<sup>th</sup> concert of the South Place Orchestra).

<sup>458</sup> Full names currently unknown.

<sup>459</sup> SPES/7/1/15: South Place Sunday Popular Concert Committee Annual Reports (SPSPC): 1909 – 10.

Prague.<sup>460</sup> She made her London debut in 1906 with the LSO and was a regular performer at the Proms. She also became a Professor at the RAM in 1924 and established herself as a proficient chamber musician. At one point she performed in an ensemble with her teacher's former colleague, Frank Bridge, as part of the English String Quartet along with Edwin Wirgo and Ivor James. She was also part of two other 'English' chamber groups that both performed at South Place: the English Trio (Ethel Hobday and Cedric Sharpe) and the English Ensemble (Rebecca Clarke, May Mukle and Kathleen Long).<sup>461</sup> Hayward's debut at South Place was in the twenty-fourth season (1909/10) and she was one of the many musicians who chose to perform for free during the John Saunders memorial concerts (as did Ethel Hobday, and Grimson) when the audience raised a £300 profit that went to the South Place scholarship fund. She continued to perform during the World War One years when there was a significant increase in female instrumentalists.<sup>462</sup> Her performance career at South Place outlived her teacher's; Grimson's career at South Place simmered out during the 1930s, whereas Hayward was one of the women musicians who returned to the South Place concerts when they resumed after World War Two. She also performed in several seasons leading up to the war, including the fifty-fourth season that ended in 1940, when the concerts were cut short and moved to the afternoon. Incidentally, that same year the London Women's String Orchestra led by Kathleen Riddick made their first appearance at South Place, which was applauded for 'excelling in sonorous tone, precision and rhythm' in its performances of Elgar and Tchaikovsky. When the concerts resumed in 1945, Hayward returned with the newly formed Marjorie Hayward String Quartet (Irene Richards, Anatol Mines and May Mukle), which continued to perform there for several years. Kathleen Riddick also came back in the fifty-ninth season with the now renamed and mixed-gendered Riddick String Orchestra, as did Marion Scott, Nona Liddell and May Mukle.<sup>463</sup>

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<sup>460</sup> McVeigh, "Building a Concert Career in Edwardian London," 240 – 1.

<sup>461</sup> SPES: Concert programme. 17<sup>th</sup> concert of the 35<sup>th</sup> season, 30 January 1921. The English Trio performed Brahms' Trio in C Major; SPES/7/1/18: South Place Sunday Popular Concert Committee Annual Reports (SPSPC): 1932 - 3. The English Ensemble played string trios by Beethoven and Mozart.

<sup>462</sup> SPES: Concert programmes, 1917 – 1920.

<sup>463</sup> SPES/7/1/18 – 19: South Place Sunday Popular Concert Committee Annual Reports (SPSPC): 1940 – 50.

Many of the women musicians of South Place, like other women across the country, took on more presence and responsibility during World War One. For example, the operatic singer Marie Brema made her South Place concert debut in 1905 to a delighted audience, and returned several times without much comment in the annual reports, other than to note her 'generous' contribution of songs. Like many other women she agreed to perform at South Place for no or little fee, and in the twenty-fifth season her appearance helped the committee to get out of some considerable debt that had built up over the year. However, during the early years of the war, Brema returned for a 'special appearance' to recite Cammaert's poem 'Chantons, Belges, Chantons' to music by Elgar, thus playing a significant part in South Place's aim to show support for the Belgian allies through music. The Women Composers' Concert was organised during the war, and consisted entirely of female performers (The Chaplins, Margaret Wild and Dorothea Crompton), and more women joined the concert committee, although this had already been steadily increasing for years. Several of the women already mentioned began their associations with South Place during this period: Rebecca Clarke and Myra Hess among others. Helen Henschel also made her debut performance at South Place in the twenty-eighth season and quickly became one of South Place's favourite performers. She may have been initially appealing to the South Place committee as she was the daughter of a well-known singer, pianist and conductor, but she soon made a name for herself. The committee were particularly impressed by her ability to accompany herself whilst singing. She only performed thirteen times in the first 1000 concerts, but became more prominent in later years. At the notable occasion in 1939 of the reveal of A. J. Clements' memorial tablet, Henschel was chosen to assist Walthew with the unveiling.<sup>464</sup> Following her success at South Place, Henschel went on to experience a more national career. In the 1960s she presented Children's Hour on BBC Radio and would play piano and speak about music, drawing on her musical upbringing and on personal anecdotes involving her father and Tchaikovsky.<sup>465</sup>

A little earlier than Henschel, Harriet Cohen gave her first performance at South Place in 1920. She played music by Arnold Bax (1883 – 1953), with whom she had a close

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<sup>464</sup> Anon. "Notes" The Monthly Record 44, no. 3 (February 1939): 13.

<sup>465</sup> Henschel, Helen. "Children's Hour." BBC Radio, 11 July 1960. Available to listen at the BL: C1398/0047.

musical and personal relationship.<sup>466</sup> The committee described Bax's music as an 'extraordinarily vivid work calling for extraordinary technique'. It appears that Cohen delivered on this time and time again, always receiving positive remarks in the annual reports. Lemy Lim established in her doctoral thesis that reports in the press focused on Cohen's beauty and choice of repertoire, but the South Place annual reports were solely preoccupied with brief notes about her high ability as a pianist. The year following her debut, Cohen performed a work by Bridge with the Grimson Quartet, and the year after she played a mix of Bach and modern works, apparently excelling at both. Like Mukle, Cohen performed with the orchestra, distinguishing herself as a soloist as well as a chamber musician. Cohen had studied with Matthay, the same teacher as Hess at the RAM, but developed a different repertoire, involving less German music and more contemporary British composers. Her unfamiliar repertoire was a perfect fit for the South Place concerts and likewise they would have offered her an ideal platform to try new material. Sadly, Cohen did not appear to play much of her female contemporaries' music; however she was a politically active woman who involved herself in women's groups outside of South Place, especially during the war; she was vice-president of the Jewish Women's Freedom League and entered into correspondence with the US Women's Army Auxiliary Corps.<sup>467</sup> After facing some difficult years throughout World War Two, Cohen immediately returned to play at South Place in 1945 and for many years after.

Although a few other women also returned to perform at South Place after the war, in general the South Place concerts took a regressive step in terms of supporting female artists. The concerts featured noticeably fewer female composers, largely due to the change that occurred leading up to the 1950s when far fewer songs were included in the programme, and eventually omitted completely, mirroring a similar turn of events at the Proms. There were far fewer women performing at the concerts in the 1950s than there had been between 1887 and 1927, when there appears to have been a much more embracing attitude. Although the number of compositions by women at South Place dropped after World War One, there were still many women performing.

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<sup>466</sup> Lim, Lemy Sungyoun. "The Reception of Women Pianists in London, 1950-60" (PhD diss., City University, London: 2010), 161 – 193.

<sup>467</sup> Lim, "The Reception of Women Pianists in London, 1950-60", 184.

During the thirty-eighth season alone, there were four all-female string quartets: The Kendall Quartet (performing Bax and Mozart); The Ladies String Quartet (Mozart); the Grace Thynne Quartet (Delius and R O Morris); and the Wayfaring String Quartet (Dahnanyi Quintet). In the same season, the Freda Swain Pianoforte Quartet performed music by Gabriel Fauré.<sup>468</sup> As McVeigh has noted, the female quartets of the time played an important role in playing contemporary music, particularly by British composers. This was certainly true at South Place and will be explored in more depth through looking at the repertoire of Jessie Grimson throughout her career at the venue. Once in a while some predictable language would creep into the South Place reports. For example, the pianist Ellen Jensen was said to perform with ‘an exceedingly delicate touch’, and Helen Henschel was described as accompanying herself ‘charmingly’.<sup>469</sup> However, the majority of comments concerning the women who performed focused on their ability, and were no more critical than the reviews of male performers. As has been highlighted in this section, many of the women who performed received very positive receptions by the committee and the audience and added diversity to the programmes. For many women, performing at South Place led to the opportunity to perform their own work and build on their careers. The following chapter focused on Grimson will throw further light on what opportunities South Place offered to women performers and how this could be navigated.

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<sup>468</sup> SPES/7/1/17: South Place Sunday Popular Concert Committee Annual Reports (SPSPC): 1923 - 4.

<sup>469</sup> SPES/7/1/17: South Place Sunday Popular Concert Committee Annual Reports (SPSPC): 1923 - 4.



Image 35 - Jessie Grimson.<sup>470</sup>



*From a photograph by E. G. Forter, Ealing.*

*Jessie Grimson*

### 7.1 Introduction

Women made up a large proportion of pianists, vocalists and string players at the concerts and at other events hosted by South Place. This is unsurprising given the rise in women taking up music performance as a hobby or career in the late nineteenth century; however the prominent roles that some of these women played at South

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<sup>470</sup> "Women Violinists of the Victorian Era." *Lady's Realm: An Illustrated Monthly Magazine*, 5 (February/March 1889): 654.

Place has yet to be explored. Jessie Grimson is a prime example. Between 1887 and 1927 she performed at the concerts one hundred and five times, only slightly less than Richard Walthew, Charles Woodhouse and Margaret Mary Yonge (1883 – 1956).<sup>471</sup> Her contributions were well appreciated by the Society, but sadly there is now little by which to remember her. Nevertheless, her contribution was commemorated in Meadmore's words: 'Plunket Greene, Richard Walthew and Jessie Grimson have, in particular, been splendid friends and workers for the concerts and have now been associated with South Place for more years than they probably care to recall'.<sup>472</sup> From the many musicians (including her family) who were involved in the first one thousand concerts, a picture of Grimson was also selected for Meadmore's book.<sup>473</sup>

Grimson was one of the many musicians who the Concert Committee managed to attract before she achieved more national success. Perhaps the most notable part of Grimson's career in hindsight, is that she was selected by Henry Wood as one of the first six women to join the Queen's Hall Orchestra in October 1913, along with Rebecca Clarke. Jessie Grimson's name regularly appears in the South Place archival material, but as a distinguished musician her life can also be fairly well traced through contemporary press reports. Her achievements have begun to be discussed by Leanne Langley and Simon McVeigh, who described Grimson and her family as one of the most remarkable musical families of the era and gave a similar accolade for Grimson's quartet.<sup>474</sup> The most extensive research about Grimson has been done by Silke Wenzel, who wrote a short but detailed biography of her life in 2012 for the German website 'Music and Gender on the Internet'.<sup>475</sup> Whilst this is based on a large number of reviews from *The Musical Times* and *The Times*, it does not properly take into account the significant input she had at South Place – arguably more than any other female performer during this period. Through exploring Grimson's experience as a performer at the Ethical Society in greater depth, this chapter will reveal more about

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<sup>471</sup> Margaret Mary Yonge referred to Mrs Ernst Yonge in the South Place documents. SPES/7/1/14 – 17: South Place Sunday Popular Concert Committee Annual Reports (SPSPC): 1887 – 1927.

<sup>472</sup> Meadmore, *The Story of a Thousand Concerts*, 38.

<sup>473</sup> Ibid., insert between 24 – 5.

<sup>474</sup> McVeigh, "'As the Sand on the Sea Shore': Women Violinists in London's Concert Life around 1900", 238 & 252.

<sup>475</sup> Information from various articles in *The Musical Times* and Wenzel, Silke. "Jessie Grimson" Accessed September 2018. [https://mugi.hfmt-hamburg.de/artikel/Jessie\\_Grimson](https://mugi.hfmt-hamburg.de/artikel/Jessie_Grimson)

life as a female musician at the South Place concerts during some of its formative musical years.

## 7.2 The Early Life of Jessie Grimson

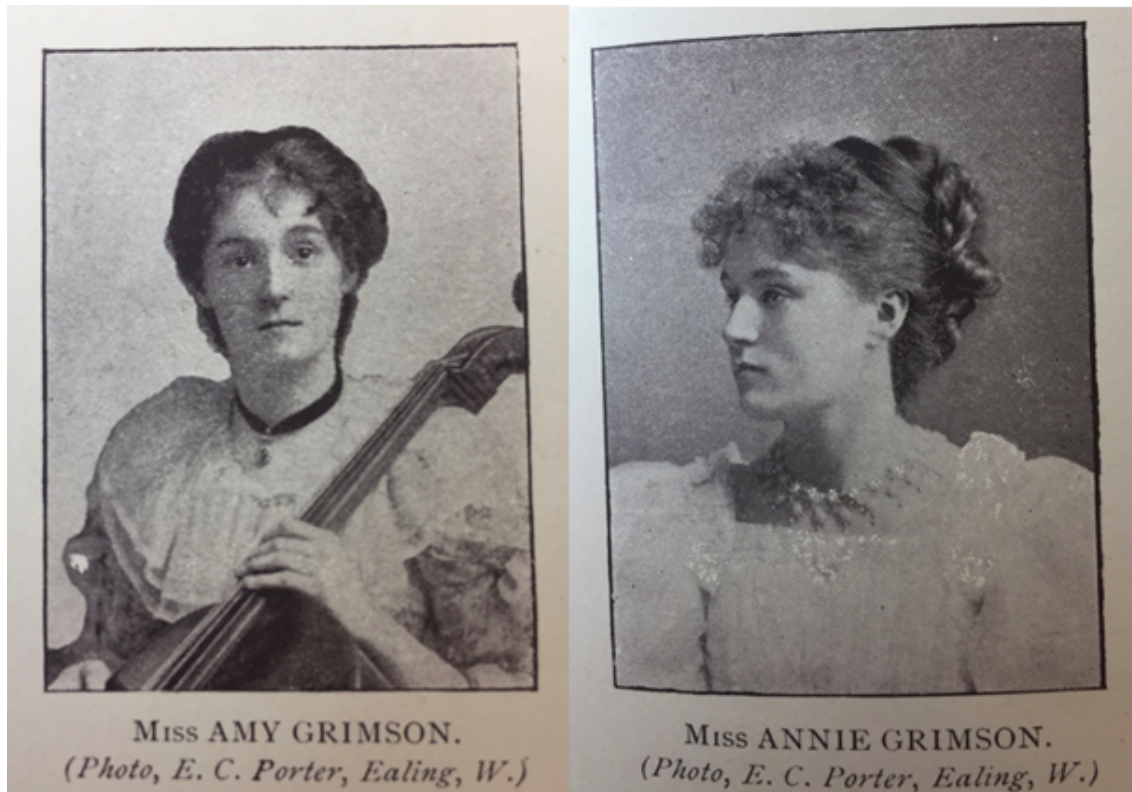
One important factor that enabled Jessie Grimson's success was her family background. Jessie Grimson was born on 26 November 1873 in Pimlico, London, into a large musical family. Her father was Samuel Dean Grimson, a violinist and viola player who was prominent in the London orchestral and chamber music scene between 1870 and 1890. He also wrote *A First Book for the Violin* that was published in 1881.<sup>476</sup> Jessie's mother was Maria Mary Anne Bonarius (1848 – 1896), who passed away when Jessie was 23. Her father remarried a woman who was younger than his children, but it is unknown whether this caused any tension in the family. If there was, it almost certainly would have been enhanced by the fact that the eldest child, Annie Maria Grimson (1870 – 1949), went on to marry a 78-year-old retired architect when she was just 41 and younger than his own children. Samuel Grimson brought up all 8 of his children as musicians, teaching them until they were skilled enough to attend the RCM. Annie Grimson studied piano and violin, although she also composed chamber music and wrote a symphony when she was just 17.<sup>477</sup> Amy Jane Grimson (1872 – 1935) won her scholarship to the RCM at the age of 14 and studied piano and cello. Dean Grimson (1875) sadly died the year he was born, but Ellen (1877- 1941) was born soon after and became a pianist and violinist. Samuel Dean Grimson Junior (1879 – 1955) also played violin and was part of the London Symphony Orchestra and like his older sister wrote a few compositions. Robert Alfred Grimson (1881 – 1953) was a cellist and organist, who after the RCM undertook further study in Berlin. The youngest child, Harold Bonarius Grimson (1882 – 1917), was also described as an exceptional violinist who, after studying with Sauret, Wilhelmj, and Joachim, went on to become the leader of the Torquay Orchestra.<sup>478</sup>

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<sup>476</sup> Grimson, Samuel Dean. *A First Book for the Violin*. London, 1881. British Library: h.1608.i.(28.)

<sup>477</sup> These works are thought to be lost but include: Symphony (c. 1887); Nocturne for Cello and Piano (London: Augener); Waltz for full orchestra (London: Phillips); Piano pieces (London: Goodwin & Tabb); Consolation for piano (London: Goodwin & Tabb 1910). See: Wenzel, Silke. "Annie Grimson" Accessed September 2018. [https://mugi.hfmt-hamburg.de/artikel/Annie\\_Grimson](https://mugi.hfmt-hamburg.de/artikel/Annie_Grimson)

<sup>478</sup> Wenzel, Silke. "Jessie Grimson" Accessed September 2018. [https://mugi.hfmt-hamburg.de/artikel/Jessie\\_Grimson](https://mugi.hfmt-hamburg.de/artikel/Jessie_Grimson)



After being taught by her father, Jessie Grimson studied the violin at the Hyde Park Academy of Music (1889) and then won a scholarship to RCM at the age of 18 (1891 – 1895).<sup>480</sup> She obviously impressed her teachers, including August Wilhelmj, who presented her with a beautiful gold-mounted French bow. She was also awarded honorary associate of RCM in 1928. Throughout her time there she performed chamber music, orchestral music and regularly performed as a soloist at concerts, which were often reported by the London press. Comments on her playing usually praised her ability as a well-rounded performer, represented by the following review from a concert that took place in November of her second year at RCM:

The Orchestral Concert... served to introduce a student of more than average promise in Miss Jessie Grimson, whose playing of Bruch's new Violin Concerto (No. 3) in D minor was of a high degree of excellence. The

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<sup>479</sup> Warriner, John. *National Portrait Gallery of British Musicians: Short biographies with portraits* (London: Sampson Low & Co., 1896).

<sup>480</sup> "Miscellaneous Concerts, Intelligence, &c." *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* 30, no. 555 (1889): 297; "Miscellaneous Concerts, Intelligence, &c." *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* 31, no. 563 (1890): 37.

work in question having been written for Joachim, it goes without saying that it bristles with difficulties of a formidable kind. Miss Grimson surmounted them with almost complete success – her tone, technique, and phrasing being alike commendable [...] That such an exacting masterpiece of chamber music as Brahms's matchless Clarinet Quintet should receive so good a rendering at the hands of five young people as on this occasion, was both astonishing and gratifying, considering the demands it makes on the executive and intellectual faculties of the performers [...] Miss Jessie Grimson more than confirmed the opinion [...] to her gifts, her playing in the Adagio being, indeed, remarkably finished and poetic.<sup>481</sup>

In other orchestral concerts at the RCM she also performed as a soloist in Spohr's Violin Concerto Op. 47 and Saint-Saëns' *Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso for violin and orchestra* Op. 28.<sup>482</sup> Grimson also appeared in many more chamber music concerts, including performances of Schumann's Piano Quintet in E♭ Major Op. 44; Beethoven's Piano Trio in D Major Op. 70 and his String Quintet in C Major Op. 29; and Brahms' Piano Quintet Op. 34, String Quartet No. 2, Op. 51 and Sextet No. 1 in B♭ Op. 18.<sup>483</sup> Even on the odd occasion when her performances were not perfect technically she was highly revered for her artistic abilities. For example, in another review in *The Musical Times* from November 1894 reads:

A very excellent performance of Mendelssohn's Octet for strings opened the Students' Concert on the afternoon of the 1st ult. Miss Jessie Grimson, who led, played with equal intelligence and executive skill, a few trifling flaws in intonation in some of the most exacting parts hardly counting as a drawback to the general excellence of her performance: while her seven coadjutors joined in producing an ensemble that deserved the warmest praise (*The Musical Times*, 1894).<sup>484</sup>

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<sup>481</sup> "Royal College of Music." *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* 33, no. 598 (1892): 729.

<sup>482</sup> "Royal College of Music." *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* 35, no. 614 (1894): 242; "Royal College of Music." *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* 36, no. 625 (1895): 166.

<sup>483</sup> "Royal College of Music." *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* 35, no. 614 (1894): 242.

<sup>484</sup> "Royal College of Music." *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* 35, no. 622 (1894): 820-21.

These early experiences and criticisms would have been beneficial towards her career at South Place and other prestigious London chamber music concerts, and the more conventional repertoire gives some idea of how she developed as a musician after leaving formal education. Yet Grimson clearly had an inclination to perform more contemporary and daring works and had the courage to pursue this in her newly found freedom as a performer. After leaving the RCM, Grimson made a successful debut at the Crystal Palace Concerts in 1896, performing Spohr's Violin Concerto in A Minor Op.47, after which *The Musical Times* reported her 'elegant phrasing, accurate intonation, and fluent execution'.<sup>485</sup> It was very soon after this that she began her long-lasting association with the South Place Concerts.

### **7.3 Jessie Grimson at South Place**

It was actually Annie and Amy Grimson who first appeared at the South Place Concerts on 31 March 1895, as pianist and cellist (respectively), playing Neils Gade (1871 – 1890) and Beethoven together, as well as piano solos of Schubert and Liszt from Annie. The same year the sisters also performed Amy Grimson's *Canzona*. Jessie Grimson's first appearance at the concerts was 26 January 1896 (10<sup>th</sup> season) when she performed with her family ensemble, on this occasion including Samuel Junr, Nellie, Harold (violins), Annie, S. Dean Grimson (violas) Amy and Robert (cellos). Six months previously, soon after the three eldest daughters had left the RCM, the family placed this advert in *The Musical Times* (Image 37):

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<sup>485</sup> "Crystal Palace Concerts." *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* 37, no. 639 (1896): 313.

THE MUSICAL TI  

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THE  
GRIMSON FAMILY.  

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This very remarkable family of Instrumentalists can be engaged for  
Concerts, &c., at moderate terms.

THE FAMILY INCLUDES

MISS ANNIE GRIMSON,

Associate and Gold Medalist, R.C.M.,

SOLO PIANIST;

MISS AMY GRIMSON,

Associate and Gold Medalist, R.C.M.,

SOLO PIANIST AND CELLIST.

MISS JESSIE GRIMSON,

SOLO VIOLINIST;

MR. S. DEAN GRIMSON,

VIOLA,

Late of the Holmes Quartet,

AND FOUR YOUNGER MEMBERS.

They are able to perform almost any combination of String Chamber  
Music. No other family has ever played such works as the Mendels-  
sohn Octet in public. Some of their programmes are specially suited  
for Literary and Musical Societies giving educational evenings.

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For terms, address, S. D. Grimson, Cremona, Ealing, W.

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<sup>486</sup> "Front Matter." *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* 36, no. 629 (1895): 433.

A member of the South Place Concert Committee with a keen eye must have spotted this advert and quickly got in touch with the ensemble to book them for their next season. The combination of esteemed musicians, reasonable rates of pay and educational value would have been too perfect a fit for South Place to miss. After a well-received first concert, the family were probably delighted to be asked back to perform so many times over the coming years. Most of Jessie Grimson's early appearances were with her family ensemble. The first programme included Brahms, Bach, Popper, Kufferath, Chopin and the Mendelssohn Octet that had been referenced in the advert (Op. 20). Earlier in the month the family had given their first official concert with a similar programme at the Queen's Small Hall. *The Times* reported both concerts with glowing reviews:

A really earnest and thoroughly artistic performance of Brahms' fine pianoforte quintet... opened the concert. (...) Their ensemble is excellent and the quality of tone is singularly refined, while the quantity is ample. (...) The experiment was an emphatic success.<sup>487</sup>

An admirable selection from the music of Brahms was given at the Ethical Society's Institute in South Place last evening. The programme opened with the magnificent string sextet in G, to which full justice was done by Miss Jessie, Miss Annie, and Miss Amy Grimson, Messrs. Harold and S. Dean Grimson, and Mr. Edward Mason. The ensemble throughout was quite perfect, and the most noticeable features of the performance were the firmness and excellent phrasing with which they played the first movement, and the exquisite artistic finish of the adagio... Miss Jessie Grimson gave as a violin solo the slow movement from the concerto in D minor, which she played with such success that she was compelled to accede to the demands for an encore.<sup>488</sup>

The programme annotations by Clements mostly suggest a similar response from the South Place audience. Notes on the programmes show that the ensemble was a great

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<sup>487</sup> *The Times* (23 January 1896), 15.

<sup>488</sup> *The Times*, 12 February 1900.



success at South Place, often receiving recalls, encores and great applause. However, on at least two occasions Clements was not entirely satisfied with their performance. Commenting on the Grimson family's performance of Dvorak's Quartet in E Minor on 19 March 1899, Clements wrote 'Very fine work. Should like to hear it played by stronger team'.<sup>489</sup> Such a remark indicates that although the Grimsons were used to receiving reviews of admiration, they were not yet considered among the most revered professional musicians in London, at least in Clements' eyes. Furthermore, during the concert on 2 December 1900, Clements noted 'Ensemble playing not as good as usual'.<sup>490</sup> Nevertheless, the Grimson family were regularly invited back to perform, suggesting that overall they performed to a high enough standard. They performed a variety of music that fit with the South Place vision of providing its audiences with music that was a mix of old, modern, well known, obscure, British and international music. They also regularly gave concerts based on one composer, such as Mendelssohn (1897), Dvorak (1898), Brahms (1900) and Tchaikovsky (1901). On five occasions, Jessie Grimson gave concerts dedicated to Scandinavian music at South Place, the first three of which were with her family ensemble.<sup>491</sup> At the first of these concerts, in March 1897, the first work on the programme was Johan Svendsen's (1840 – 1911) Octet in A, Op.3, which the family had performed the year previously (a few months after their South Place debut) at a concert in Woodside Hall, North Finchley. In that instance, the family gave almost the entire concert themselves, with the addition of two singers, and also played Schumann's Piano Quintet in E♭ Major.<sup>492</sup> The South Place concert was similar in that they were assisted by one singer (Agnes Witting), but the rest of the concert was performed by the family. It was likely organised by them too, on the basis that some of the repertoire shows up in their previous performances and Jessie Grimson clearly had a keen interest in Scandinavian music, given the fact that she was involved in the majority of the concerts of its kind. Another indication of this is that the first three concert programmes all contained an overview of

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<sup>489</sup> SPES: Concert Programme. 24<sup>th</sup> concert of the 13<sup>th</sup> season, 19 March 1899.

<sup>490</sup> SPES: Concert Programme. 9<sup>th</sup> concert of the 15<sup>th</sup> season, 2 December 1900.

<sup>491</sup> SPES: Concert programmes. 25<sup>th</sup> concert of the 11<sup>th</sup> season, 28 March 1897; 20<sup>th</sup> concert of the 12<sup>th</sup> season, 20 February 1898; 1<sup>st</sup> concert of the 15<sup>th</sup> season, 7 October 1901; 1<sup>st</sup> concert of the 32<sup>nd</sup> season, 7 October 1917; 2<sup>nd</sup> concert of the 35<sup>th</sup> season, 10 October 1910. Other Scandinavian concerts were performed by her close colleagues including John Saunders, Charles Woodhouse, Ernest Yonge and Charles A. Crabbe (e.g. 3<sup>rd</sup> concert of the 28<sup>th</sup> season, 19 October 1913).

<sup>492</sup> "Miscellaneous Concerts, Intelligence, &c." *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* 37, no. 646 (1896): 830.

Scandinavian music that was not included in the concerts when the Grimsons were not performing. Also, within the 1897 notes on Svendsen's Octet, it is written: 'The writer of this "note" took part in a performance of it nearly thirty years ago', suggesting that the notes were written by the father Samuel D. Grimson, as Clements would have been too young for this anecdote. This would therefore suggest that Grimson's sustained interest in Scandinavian music had developed from her father. The programmes were put together in a very South Place fashion, juxtaposing the best known Scandinavian composers of the period (Grieg, Svendsen and Gade) with some much more obscure ones. For example, the 1897 programme included music by Andreas Berggreen (1801 – 1880) and Halfdan Kjerulf (1815 – 1868) as well as some folk tunes, and the following two concerts also included Sinding and Lindblad. The third concert also included a repetition of Svendsen's Octet with a slightly different ensemble, including Ethel Rooke and Edward Mason, replacing Samuel Grimson Jr. and Robert Grimson. Whether it was the new additions, or just an off day for the ensemble, Clements' review of the performance was that the ensemble were 'a little frayed at the edges'.<sup>493</sup>

Around this time, the family started playing with other South Place performers occasionally. One of these was Edward Mason (1878 - 1915), who Jessie Grimson married in 1905. Edward Mason also studied at RCM and worked as a teacher at Eton College. He was a renowned cellist but also played violin, viola and piano. It is easy to spot shared aspirations between the couple. In 1906 he became conductor and lead cellist of the New Symphony Orchestra, supported by Sir Thomas Beecham. The orchestra had many high-quality players, and special guests including the well-known orchestral leader and South Place supporter John Saunders and Jessie Grimson who at this point was still being described as a 'rising' violinist. In 1907 he set up the Edward Mason choir, which had over 100 singers and performed concerts up until World War One, at venues such as the Queen's Hall. One of the aims of his choir was to perform premieres and little-known works by young British composers. Over the six-year period over thirty British composers were represented.

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<sup>493</sup> SPES: Concert programme. 1<sup>st</sup> concert of the 15<sup>th</sup> season, 7 October 1900.

Jessie Grimson was also passionate about representing new British composers, and to this end she set up her own quartet in 1902, known as the Jessie Grimson String Quartet. Despite all of Edward Mason's notable achievements, his obituary states that he was principally known as the cellist from Grimson's String Quartet, showing their level of notability. Grimson and Mason married soon after the ensemble began. The other founding members of the quartet were Ernest Tomlinson (also a member of the Wesseley and Spencer Dyke Quartets) and the composer Frank Bridge. It was still quite rare for women to form and lead string quartets in which all other players were male. It was certainly a first for South Place, although Grimson was following the example of violinists such as Lady Hallé (1838 – 1911) and Maud Powell (1867 – 1920). Grimson already knew Bridge at least on a professional level, as she had performed with him during his series of musical lectures at Gresham College in 1898.<sup>494</sup> The Quartet were keen to play and promote both Classical and Romantic repertoire and contemporary works by British composers, which correlated precisely with the well-established taste of the South Place Concert programmes. This included many works by Bridge, using the opportunity of regular performances at South Place to premiere and promote his own music. As Fabian Huss has highlighted in his book about Bridge's music, Bridge also arranged for his own music to be performed by other ensembles with which he performed, such as the English String Quartet, the Joachim Quartet and the Motto Quartet.<sup>495</sup> While Bridge was in the Grimson Quartet, he appeared more in the programmes as a performer than a composer, but The Grimson Quartet performed his works regularly enough that it inspired other performances by ensembles such as The Wessely String Quartet and The Allied String Quartet.<sup>496</sup>

It has been claimed that The Grimson Quartet's debut performance was at Bechstein Hall on 16 May 1902, with a programme said to include a Schubert quartet and a new string quartet by Bridge.<sup>497</sup> However, the first appearance of the Jessie Grimson String Quartet at the South Place concerts was in fact 2 March 1902, meaning that this could

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<sup>494</sup> "The Royal College of Music." *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* 39, no. 670 (1898): 808; "Gresham Lectures." *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* 39, no. 670 (1898): 814.

<sup>495</sup> Huss, Fabian, *The Music of Frank Bridge* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2015), 44 – 46; "London Concerts." *The Musical Times* 48, no. 770 (1907): 254.

<sup>496</sup> SPES: Concert programme. 7<sup>th</sup> concert of the 21<sup>st</sup> season, 18 November 1906; 8<sup>th</sup> concert of the 33<sup>rd</sup> season, 24 November 1918.

<sup>497</sup> "Miscellaneous." *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* 43, no. 711 (1902): 337; and McVeigh, "'As the Sand on the Sea Shore': Women Violinists in London's Concert Life around 1900", 252.

have been their debut performance. At this concert, Edward Mason also performed a cello solo, accompanied by Jessie's sister, Annie, who regularly performed with the quartet in this capacity. In the early 1900s, the Jessie Grimson String Quartet performed music by British composers such as Coleridge Taylor, Ernest Austin, Edith Swepstone, James Friskin, Charles Villiers Stanford, Sterndale Bennett, Elgar, Cyril Scott and Richard Walthew, sometimes accompanied by the composers and sometimes premieres. By the time of the 1907 – 8 concert committee report, Grimson was being described as one of their 'chief helpers'. This suggests that she played more of a part in the organisation of the concerts than can be understood from the minute books and ephemera, although the minute books show that she was involved in interviewing potential performers. In the twenty-third season, Jessie Grimson's quartet joined forces with Saunders' quartet and gave 'splendid renderings of Svensden's fine and exhilarating Octet and Spohr's beautiful but rarely performed Double Quartet in G Minor, and Miss Grimson and Mr Saunders played Saraste's brilliant "Navarre" Duet for Two Violins'.<sup>498</sup> The two quartets often played together in the final concert of a season, in the hope of a large ensemble attracting large crowds and donations to boost the concert committee's funds and wipe off any debt.

In February 1909 the ensemble dedicated an entire concert to the contemporary British composer Hubert Parry, with Amy Grimson as pianist and the popular Irish singer Harry Plunket Green. Another concert in 1910 was dedicated to the works of Frank Bridge, allowing the performer and composer to promote his own music.<sup>499</sup> Other concerts were dedicated to Tchaikovsky, Grieg, Dvorak, modern French, and Scandinavian music. In 1913 the committee wrote 'A warm welcome was extended to Miss Jessie Grimson, Miss Amy Grimson, and Mr Edward Mason, on their return after an absence of two years, and the audience had the pleasure of hearing them both before and after Christmas', although confusingly the programmes show that Grimson had performed in the 1910/11 series. Sadly, World War One had devastating consequences on Jessie Grimson both personally and professionally. The first tragedy was the loss of her husband and fellow musician Edward Mason, who was killed at the front on 9 May 1915, near Fromelles (France). His death was reported in the concert

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<sup>498</sup> SPES/7/1/15: South Place Sunday Popular Concert Committee Annual Reports (SPSPC): 1908 – 9.

<sup>499</sup> SPES: Concert programme. 14<sup>th</sup> concert of the 24<sup>th</sup> season, 16 January 1910.

committee's twenty-ninth annual report, where he was described as an excellent cellist and choral conductor.<sup>500</sup> The press noted him as 'the first well known London musician to fall in the war'. In 1917, Jessie's brother Harold was also severely injured in the battle of Cambrai, which ended his music career. The British Army Service Records stated that Jessie Grimson never recovered from her losses and gave up her performing career in 1927, yet the South Place archive shows a different story.<sup>501</sup> Even during the war, whilst presumably grieving from the loss of her husband, she continued to perform at South Place.

Image 38 - Edward Mason.<sup>502</sup>



The Jessie Grimson String Quartet continued to perform but with a variety of different performers. During the war, Grimson performed with more women and some men

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<sup>500</sup> SPES/7/1/16: South Place Sunday Popular Concert Committee Annual Reports (SPSPC): 1914 - 5.

<sup>501</sup> Lives of the First World War. "Private Harold Grimson: British Army Service Record, 1914 – 20 Transcription." 1 December 1917. Accessed February 2018.

<https://livesofthefirstworldwar.org/lifestory/1483882>

<sup>502</sup> Imperial War Museum. "Second lieutenant Edward Mason." Accessed October 2018.  
<https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/205393719>

who were already regulars at South Place and some of her family members; before he went to war Harold occasionally appeared with the quartet, as did Robert and Amy. The change in members may have been one reason why the programmes were more traditional than the quartet had previously been heard to perform. There was more music by Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, for example, although British music was still interspersed. The total change in ensemble also appears to have been affected by a change of heart by some members of the group. Despite the Grimson quartet often receiving extra payments, Grimson wrote to the South Place committee apologising on behalf of the ensemble because certain members were no longer willing to perform for the limited fee. As Frank Bridge did not reappear with the ensemble at South Place after the war, this suggests it was he who would not perform without an enhanced fee, which the South Place committee could not provide. Similarly, in 1916, the violist Lionel Tertis refused to play again at South Place, on the grounds that they were 'charity concerts', although this does not necessarily reflect Bridge's views. In subsequent years, Charles Woodhouse and Patterson Parker usually replaced Edward Mason and Frank Bridge, although this was not consistent. This highlights the fact the Jessie Grimson was the main attraction of this quartet. Interestingly, in the 1920s the quartet continued to play work by Bridge at South Place, presumably showing that there were not too many hard feelings resulting from the split.

In 1924, a combination of artists, committee members and audience members decided to host an event to show their appreciation to Alfred J. Clements for the many years of hard work he had dedicated to the South Place concerts. Both Grimson and Sweptstone joined the organising committee, along with many of their musical colleagues, including Walthew and Charles Villiers Stanford.<sup>503</sup> At the celebration, Clements spoke about many others who had made vital contributions to the concerts, giving special mentions to the late John Saunders and the unfortunately absent Jessie Grimson. A few years later in 1927, when Jessie Grimson reportedly gave up her performing career, it is true that she did not play at the South Place concerts for the first time in

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<sup>503</sup> Other committee members include: Ethel Attwood, W. W. Cobbett, Helen Mary Fairhall, Harry Farjeon, Ethel Fenton, H. Plunket Greene, Hamilton Harty, Frank A. Hawkins, Alfred Hobday, Ethel Hobday, Joseph Speaight, J. H. K. Todd, Gerald Walenn. SPES. Documentation relating to Clements presentation, 1924 (uncatalogued). F.M.O. "Presentation to Alfred J. Clements." and *The Monthly Record* 29, no.4 (April 1924) 6 – 10.

30 years, and her absence was duly noted by the South Place committee in their reports. Nevertheless, she returned the following year and continued to perform with a variety of ensembles, often under the name of the Jessie Grimson String Quartet, throughout the rest of the 20s and the 30s.

#### 7.4 Outside the Ethical Society

Jessie Grimson had developed an esteemed reputation as a violinist beyond South Place and continued to perform after the war, including after 1927. In the popular magazine *Lady's Realm* targeted at the middle- and upper-class 'new women', Grimson was described as a violinist 'coming to the front' in 1899, after a few years of her career at South Place.<sup>504</sup> In 1898, many musicians who played at South Place performed at another concert in London organised by the English clarinettist George Arthur Clinton. In the ensemble were Grimson, Mathilde Verne, Walthew, Hobday, Tomlinson, Borsdorf, Parker, Arthur Walenn and Clinton himself. As the programme included Walthew's Trio in C Minor for piano, violin and clarinet, it seems likely that Walthew had recruited from his network of friends and colleagues from South Place to support his work and form the rest of the concert.<sup>505</sup> Grimson's debut performance at Bechstein Hall was also with South Place colleagues Helen Trust and Marian McKenzie. Along with the harpist Miriam Timothy (a favourite of Queen Victoria), they interspersed chamber music by Dvorak and Mozart with songs by Chaminade, Lehmann and White.<sup>506</sup> Grimson was clearly a well-established member of the South Place network.

During the last few years of the nineteenth century, Grimson performed successful concerts with her family at Queen's Hall and the Leighton Rooms in London, and in the Edgbaston Assembly Rooms in Birmingham as part of a charity concert raising money

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<sup>504</sup> Anon. "Women Violinists of the Victorian Era." *Lady's Realm: An Illustrated Monthly Magazine*, 5 (February/March 1889): 654.

<sup>505</sup> "Mr. G. A. Clinton's Chamber Concerts." *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* 39, no. 664 (1898): 393.

<sup>506</sup> Wigmore Hall. "Concert Programme: Wednesday 12 June 1901." Accessed October 2018. <https://wigmore-hall.org.uk/whats-on/helen-trust-marian-mckenzie-gregory-hast-denham-price-jessie-grimson-miriam-timothy-190106121530>

for the St. Anthony Home for Destitute Girls.<sup>507</sup> Often at these family concerts Grimson would also perform solos. As her independent career progressed, Grimson continued to perform at events outside London. She performed as a soloist with the Gloucester Orpheus Society, and gave concerts in Newcastle, Hereford and Cambridge as part of an ensemble.<sup>508</sup> In 1901, she also performed at the Eton College annual grand concert, likely to have been organised by her future husband Edward Mason. Grimson had a wide-ranging repertoire, particularly when giving solo concerts. At St. James's Hall in 1901, she performed a difficult programme of music by Bruch, Vitali, Ernst, Dvorak, Wilhelmj and Wieniawski, which showed off her beautiful tone and phrasing. With an ensemble, she also gave the premiere performance of Ralph Vaughan Williams' Quintet in D Major at Queen's Hall, highlighting her interest in contemporary British music.

Once Grimson formed her quartet with Mason, Tomlinson and Bridge, most of her performances were with the ensemble in many of London's busiest chamber music venues. A review in *The Times* of one concert at St. James's Hall stated that the ensemble were 'conspicuously successful' and 'admirably artistic' in their performance of Debussy's String Quartet in G Minor and Tchaikovsky's Quartet in E ♭ Minor (Op. 30).<sup>509</sup> At a Monday Popular Concert in 1904, they joined forces with Johann Kruse's string quartet to perform the same Mendelssohn Octet that Grimson performed with her family at their South Place debut, suggesting she may have steered the choice of music in this instance.<sup>510</sup> Kruse performed with the ensemble again the following month to perform Dvorak's Piano Quintet in A Major (Op. 81), accompanied by Amy Grimson.<sup>511</sup> Even though the family ensemble had ceased to perform together as a whole, members of the family often joined Grimson's Quartet when required.<sup>512</sup> Annie

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<sup>507</sup> Review of concert at Queen's Hall: "Miscellaneous Concerts, Intelligence, &c." *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* 38, no. 649 (1897): 193. Concert at Edgbaston: "Music in Birmingham." *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* 39, no. 660 (1898): 113.

<sup>508</sup> For details of each concert see: Gloucester: "Music in Gloucester and District." *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* 44, no. 720 (1903): 120. Newcastle: "Music in Newcastle and District." *The Musical Times* 45, no. 734 (1904): 257. Hereford: "Hereford Musical Festival." *The Musical Times* 53, no. 836 (1912): 666. Cambridge: Bodleian Library: A.L. Bacharach collection: Box 3 (1912 – 5). Mus. 317c.3; Bodleian Library: A. L. Bacharach collection: Box 4 (1916 – 9). Mus. 317c.4.

<sup>509</sup> *The Times* (14 December 1908) 6.

<sup>510</sup> *The Times* (19 January 1904) 4.

<sup>511</sup> *The Times* (26 May 1904) 4.

<sup>512</sup> E.g. Robert Grimson at Bechstein Hall. See: *The Times* (1 March 1905) 11.



Grimson played less with the ensemble but did play at other concerts in London, Eastbourne and Bournemouth, and in 1913 was appointed a Professor at the GSM.<sup>513</sup> Thus, while all of the Grimson siblings developed successful careers as musicians, in respect of the chamber music scene, Jessie Grimson was clearly leading the pack.

An interest in the careers of women musicians is also apparent from Jessie Grimson's involvement with the Society of Women Musicians, of which she was a member between 1912 and 1917. She organised a concert for the Society at the Women's Institute in February 1915 and took part in performances alongside other well-known female string players such as her South Place colleague Rebecca Clarke.<sup>514</sup> The BBC online archive also shows that Jessie Grimson performed in a Proms concert in 1914 at the Queen's Hall. It finished with Elgar's *Land of Hope and Glory* and the Belgian National Anthem, marking the early years of World War One. Grimson was the soloist for Max Bruch's Violin Concerto No.1 in G Minor. She had performed this piece many years before in 1906, supported by Edward Mason's New Symphony Orchestra in the Queen's Hall, and it was said that the music showed off her great skill as a performer.<sup>515</sup> In the early war years, Grimson and Clarke were also on the judging panel for the Cobbett String Orchestra competition, alongside South Place colleagues Marjorie Clements, Ethel and Alfred Hobday, Hans Wessley, Helen Trust, Richard Walthew and Alfred Clements. This highlights the position that Grimson and her peers had reached by this point in their career, as well as the importance of the connections that they all made at South Place during this time. Grimson also performed with her family at the Oxford Ladies Musical Society in 1899, which had been founded the year before, when women were excluded from the Oxford University Musical Club. The Society generally employed musicians known from the London concert halls, and the Grimsons performed there, as did other colleagues from South Place such as May Mukle, Frank Bridge and Marjorie Hayward. Although this was a ladies' club, most of the compositions were written by men. Some vocal works were included by other names recognisable from the South Place programmes, such as Liza and Amelia

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<sup>513</sup> Wyndham, Saxe, *Who's who in music: a biographical record of contemporary musicians* (Boston: Small, Maynard and Company, 1913) 95.

<sup>514</sup> "London Concerts." *The Musical Times* 56, no. 864 (1915): 108.

<sup>515</sup> "London Concerts." *The Musical Times* 47, no. 761 (1906): 490.

Lehmann, Maude Valérie White, Amy Woodforde-Finden and Adela Maddison.<sup>516</sup> In the same season, Jessie and Amy Grimson also performed at other Oxford University concerts, clearly making the most of a prolonged stay together in the city. They played a prominent part in a concert hosted by Balliol College, and soon after performed instrumental solos at Merton College's concert of part-songs.<sup>517</sup>

Grimson also continued to promote British music, performing at the Thomas Dunhill Chamber concerts at Steinway Hall with other top musicians. After the war, as well as performing at South Place, Jessie Grimson continued to perform around the UK, with her own quartet, the Elxy pianoforte quartet and many other ensembles. Notably, she performed at several concerts for the People's Concert Society throughout the 1920s, which had similar aims to the South Place Concert committee in providing excellent chamber music at affordable prices for all classes of London inhabitants. Examples include children's concerts from 1925 – 6, with The Jessie Grimson Quartet, although this now consisted of Grimson (violin), Mary Stewart (viola), Robert Grimson or Phyllis Hasluck (cello) and Hester Stansfield Prior (piano), who had been the SWM president from 1938 – 43.<sup>518</sup> These concerts included five minutes' sing-along for the audience, followed by a more conventional programme of chamber music than Grimson would perform at South Place.<sup>519</sup> The concerts were broadcast on the BBC, so were widely heard. She also performed with the BBC's 2LO Trio in 1925, broadcasting 'Thinking of the Ganges' by radical journalist and musician Mrs Stan Harding (née Sedine Milana) and 'Clocks and Watches' by Violet Methley (1882 – 1953).<sup>520</sup> Her final performances for radio broadcast were given in 1933.<sup>521</sup>

Although Jessie Grimson has been slightly neglected as a performer since her death in 1954, her legacy has remained through the many pupils she taught throughout her career, such as Marjorie Hayward (Image 39) and Nona Liddell (Image 40), who wrote about her lessons with Jessie Grimson with fond memories. Liddell became the leader

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<sup>516</sup> Seddon, *British Women Composers and Instrumental Chamber Music in the Early Twentieth Century*, 46 – 50.

<sup>517</sup> "Music in Oxford." *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* 40, no. 677 (1899): 481.

<sup>518</sup> *The Radio Times* (16 October 1925), 156; *The Radio Times* (15 October 1926), 186.

<sup>519</sup> Composers such as Mozart, Handel and Tchaikovsky. See: *The Radio Times* (26 December 1924), 18.

<sup>520</sup> *The Radio Times* (30 December 1932), 978.

<sup>521</sup> *The Radio Times* (26 December 1924), 18.

of the London Sinfonietta and made her first appearance at the South Place concerts in the fifty-ninth season (1949/50). She wrote for *The Strad* in detail about the techniques that Jessie Grimson used to teach her and said that she was a great admirer of the technique of the Czech violinist Otakar Ševčík (1852 – 1934). Clearly drawing from her professional experience, Jessie taught Liddell to play quartet repertoire from an early age, and invited professional friends to come over and perform with her students, allowing the students to take the lead part in the quartet. She also took her students to hear the professional players of the day to inspire her pupils. According to Liddell, none of her later teachers ever wanted to change her technique, saying that her posture and playing style were exceptionally free and relaxed. As long as she could, Grimson attended her students' concerts and often provided feedback on their playing.<sup>522</sup> It is possible then, that although Grimson did not perform much after World War Two, she may have been present at Liddell's own South Place debut, over 50 years after her own. As noted in Chapter 5, there were significantly fewer women performing at the South Place concerts following their post-World War Two revival. It is disappointing that Jessie Grimson's pioneering activity as a lead female violinist did not have a more long-term effect on the concerts, but for many years the combination of a general rise in female violinists and Grimson's leading example led to a noticeable rise in female-led quartets at South Place.

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<sup>522</sup> The Strad. "Violinist Nona Liddell on studying with female orchestral pioneer Jessie Grimson." Last modified 12 December 2014. Accessed October 2018.  
<https://www.thestrad.com/violinist-nona-liddell-on-studying-with-female-orchestral-pioneer-jessie-grimson/6267.article>

Image 39 - Marjorie Hayward.<sup>523</sup>



Image 40 - Nona Liddell.<sup>524</sup>



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<sup>523</sup> The Cooper Collection. "Albert's Album". Accessed October 2018.

<http://www.thecoopercollection.co.uk/album.htm>

<sup>524</sup> The Telegraph. "Obituaries: Nona Liddell, brilliant violinist" Last modified 22 April 2017. Accessed October 2018. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/obituaries/2017/04/22/nona-liddell-brilliant-violinist-obituary/>

## 7.5 Conclusion

The South Place Sunday Popular Concerts gave Jessie Grimson a place to grow as a performer. Her first performances at South Place came from a young woman, recently out of college, who was in the early stages of performing with her family ensemble. Grimson's later performances at South Place came from a woman with decades of experience, who had performed with world-class performers and successfully led an ensemble in her name with notable musicians. The South Place committee supported Grimson's transition from amateur to professional. The concerts enabled her opportunities to meet and work with talented musicians who were all at different stages of their careers, while she developed her craft. It is likely from the reports that Grimson contributed more than we know behind the scenes, but there must have been something special at South Place that made Grimson dedicate a lot of her time and talent to the Society. She clearly built some important musical networks from the Society, and it is likely that she made some important friendships there too. Although there is not much evidence of Grimson participating in activities outside of the musical events, she must have had respect for the general aims of the ethical movement to be associated with it for so long; it certainly was not the money that kept her tied there. There was reciprocity in the professional relationship. South Place gave Grimson the platform to experiment with her repertoire, which in turn gave them a vessel through which to deliver new and unusual music to their audience who came to expect a diverse selection of music each season. As McVeigh has highlighted, while female-led quartets may not have been the only ones to espouse new music, they made an important contribution to the opening up of the repertoire in the 1900s, and Jessie Grimson was a prime example of such a leader.<sup>525</sup>

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<sup>525</sup> McVeigh, Simon. "'As the Sand on the Sea Shore': Women Violinists in London's Concert Life around 1900." In: *Essays on the History of English Music in Honour of John Caldwell*, edited by Emma Hornby and David Maw, 232 – 258. Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2010.

## 8.1 Introduction

Current accounts of Edith Swepstone as a person and as a composer are sparse and somewhat inaccurate. The short entry provided by Lewis Foreman in *Oxford Music Online*, like many other sources, contains little detail about her life and opens with ‘English composer and teacher. Little about her is known’.<sup>526</sup> Laura Seddon fairly describes her as an ‘elusive’ composer and speculates that much of her music has been destroyed. Many other accounts provide incomplete lists of her compositions and their performances. This chapter is still far from a complete picture of the composer, mostly due to the continued absence of much of her music and any of her personal papers. Nevertheless, a thorough examination of press articles and her work at South Place can show a much more rounded view of the composer and her extensive compositional output. Furthermore, after years of collating music by Swepstone from a variety of different locations, there is in fact a much more substantial collection of her work than I had anticipated, certainly enough to say something about her musical style and approach, even though some of the pieces that might have been highly relevant to this project have been impossible to trace.

Despite a lack of information about Swepstone today, reviews from her time indicate that she earned a certain amount of success and respect. Sophie Fuller notes that Fuller Maitland identified 16 women (in just 5 pages, as opposed to 61 men in the other 288) as figures of the musical renaissance in his 1902 account of nineteenth-century music.<sup>527</sup> One of the selected women was Swepstone, alongside Agnes Zimmermann, Ethel Smyth, Mary Carmichael, Maude Valérie White, Liza Lehmann and Frances Allitsen, whose music was also performed at South Place. Swepstone was noted, in particular, for her cantatas and solo songs that were ‘deservedly successful’.<sup>528</sup> The following year, the notable critic and supporter of innovative contemporary music Edwin Evans, wrote a series of articles under ‘Modern British Music’ in *The Musical Standard*, in which he focused on Swepstone as well as Algernon

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<sup>526</sup> Foreman, Lewis. “Swepstone, Edith” in *Oxford Music Online*. Accessed October 2018.

<sup>527</sup> Fuller, “Women composers during the British Musical Renaissance 1880 – 1918”, 11.

<sup>528</sup> Fuller-Maitland, J. A. *English Music in the XIXth Century* (London: Grant Richards, 1902), 269.

Ashton, Herbert Bedford, Josef Holbrooke, Cyril Scott and Ralph Vaughan Williams. His criteria for their inclusion was that they were pioneering and innovative composers of modern music, indicating contemporary views of Swebstone as a composer.<sup>529</sup> In the article on William Hurlstone and Swebstone, Evans praises Swebstone's originality, particularly in her chamber music for wind, the Piano Trio in A Minor and two of her orchestral works – sadly all of which are still missing. His main criticism is that he feels Swebstone allowed herself to be held back by the nature of her training – a problem less faced by the 'rougher sex', but he is largely impressed by her style and capability, recognising her as an 'already distinguished' composer.<sup>530</sup> Similarly, in the *Handbook of Music and Musicians*, she was described as a 'serious' composer.<sup>531</sup> She was also included in Brown and Stratton's *British Musical Biography* (1897), and the *Cyclopedia of Chamber Music* compiled by Walter Willson Cobbett (1847 – 1937), to whom Seddon largely attributed the renaissance of chamber music in London during the early twentieth century.<sup>532</sup>

It was towards the end of Swebstone's life that her legacy seems to have quickly diminished. Other than references in work by Bartley, Fuller and Seddon (among a few others), she is rarely discussed and apart from a recent concert at Conway Hall, her work has not been performed since her death in 1942.<sup>533</sup> Peculiarly, Swebstone is also acknowledged twice in the BBC's 1995 book about the history of British music, *Fairest Isle*.<sup>534</sup> In his chapter about the British renaissance period (which he sets as 1880 – 1914), Michael Kennedy noted 38 composers, including four women. Only one is a particularly obvious choice – Ethel Smyth. The others, Dora Bright, Amy Woodforde-Finden and Edith Swebstone are more surprising choices. Swebstone is mentioned

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<sup>529</sup> Evans, Edwin. "Modern British Composers." *Musical Standard* 19, no. 490 (23 May 1903): 321-323.

<sup>530</sup> Evans, "Modern British Composers", 130-131.

<sup>531</sup> Wharton-Wells, Harry. *A Handbook of Music and Musicians* (London: Nelson and Sons, 1912).

<sup>532</sup> Brown, James D., and Stratton, Stephen S. *British Musical Biography: A Dictionary of musical artists, authors and composers born in Britain and its colonies*. London: William Reeves, 1897; Cobbett, Walter Willson. *Cobbett's Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music: Volume 1 & II*. Reprint. by Colin Mason, London: Oxford University Press, 1963; Seddon, *British Women Composers and Instrumental Chamber Music in the Early Twentieth Century*, 42 – 3.

<sup>533</sup> Bartley, *Far from the Fashionable Crowd*, 51, 113, 154; Fuller, "Women composers during the British Musical Renaissance 1880 – 1918.", 87, 93, 96, 124, 225, 173; Seddon, *British Women Composers and Instrumental Chamber Music*, 1, 46, 52 – 3, 170 – 1.

<sup>534</sup> Kennedy, Michael. "Prometheus Unbound: The British Musical Renaissance 1880 - 1914." In *Fairest Isle: BBC Radio 3 Book of British Music*, edited by David Fraser, 66 – 76. London: BBC, 1995.

twice in reference to her symphonic work and Kennedy opens up the question of what happened to the now mostly unheard music of the composer. By including her name alongside many well-known names of the British renaissance, Kennedy's chapter clarifies that despite overwhelming neglect, Swepstone's contribution to nineteenth-century British music was enough to leave at least a few traces.

These traces are most glaringly obvious within the music-related material in South Place archive, where she seems to have been active and present for many years. Of all the music performed in the South Place concerts between 1887 and 1927, Swepstone's works make up over a third of the purely instrumental works composed by women (see Table 4 in Chapter 6). Unlike some of the women who were likely just chosen for the programme by the committee or the performers and were not necessarily present, Swepstone took part in many areas of the Society's musical life and was involved in the performances of her works. The rest of this chapter will provide as detailed an account as possible of her significance at South Place and subsequently give a much more robust account of her career than has been previously discovered. An exploration of her life, career and music will also seek to uncover how Swepstone went from being considered a noteworthy British composer to 'elusive' in less than a century. Is her limited legacy the inevitable outcome of an average composer, or did Swepstone deserve more recognition but was not one of the lucky ones to be regarded as a composer worth remembering? The chapter will also keep a constant focus on whether Swepstone's fate was affected by her gender, and the role played by South Place.

## **8.2 Early Life and Student Years**

Edith Swepstone (1862 – 1942) was born in Stepney, London, the city where she remained for the majority of her life. The Swepstones were a wealthy family; Edith's mother, Mary Turner, came from a rich background, and Edith's father, William Henry Swepstone, worked as a solicitor in London. The family moved to Hackney in the 1870s and lived in one of the largest houses in the area with domestic maids and cooks. Edith was the second eldest, and was baptised alongside her older brother Harry (1859 – 1907) in February 1862 at St Dunstan Church in Stepney. She had one other brother, Clarence (1874 - 1917), who worked as a bank clerk but died much earlier than the rest



of his siblings, presumably from service during the war. Clarence had a twin, Maude (1874 – 1940), and they had two other sisters, Lilian (1872 – 1951) and Gertrude (1864 – 1942). As was normal in a Victorian family, the four sisters were brought up with different futures in mind to their brothers. Whilst Harry and Clarence were educated for lucrative careers, Edith and her sisters were all educated in the arts, presumably with the aim of making them all desirable women for marriage. Unfortunately, if that was William and Mary's plan, it was not a successful one, as only one of the sisters ever married. At the age of 19, Lilian Swepstone was studying at the School of Art, and when she was 27 married Edward James Fleetwood Moore, a medical practitioner.<sup>535</sup> Edith, Gertrude and Maude all studied music and died as spinsters. Possibly Edith reached a point in her career where she was considered too successful or hard-working, rendering her an unmarriageable 'blue-stocking'.

Maude also reached a level of success as a musician, leading the City of London College Orchestra for several years from 1907 onwards.<sup>536</sup> Although this was a position of leadership, it was much more usual for a woman to be a leading performer, even desirable, although her talents never led to marriage. This may have been her own choice. There is potential that she formed a close relationship with the Belgian writer and Catholic priest Guido Gezelle, whose selection of poems she translated in 1937.<sup>537</sup> Gezelle was renowned for trying to develop an independent language that was heavily influenced by West Flemish dialect. Maude also translated and published an extremely religious play *Sanguis Christi*, which was first performed in Bruges with 3000 participants and an audience of over 125,000.<sup>538</sup> Although it is slightly peculiar that out of the sisters, only Edith and Gertrude were left money by their mother when she passed away in 1924, it is unlikely that Maude wrote these translations out of a desperate financial need. The assumption can be made, therefore, that Maude had a genuine interest in the texts and was extremely fluent in the local language, and in all

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<sup>535</sup> "Swepstone, Lilian." Census Returns of England and Wales, 1891. 5 April 1891; "Swepstone, Lilian." London, England, Church of England Marriages and Banns, 1754 – 1932. 8 June 1899.

<sup>536</sup> Short reviews of the orchestra's performances can be found in: "London Concerts." *The Musical Times* 48, no. 770 (1907): 255; "London Concerts." *The Musical Times* 48, no. 773 (1907): 477; "London Concerts." *The Musical Times* 50, no. 797 (1909): 470; "London Concerts." *The Musical Times* 51, no. 803 (1910): 28.

<sup>537</sup> Gezelle, Guido, *Selection from his Poems*, translated by Maude Swepstone with short account of his life (Bristol: Burleigh Press, 1937).

<sup>538</sup> Boon, Josef, *Sanguis Christi: The play of the Holy Blood of Brugge* translated by Maude Swepstone (Leuven: Opbouwen, 1947).

likelihood lived as a Catholic in Bruges – quite distanced from any lasting association with the Ethical Society. However, Edith did leave a piano to Maude in her will, suggesting that they had kept in contact and that Maude was still interested in music.

Gertrude, on the other hand, followed a similar path to Edith. Both of the sisters attended the Guildhall School of Music for several years. Between 1888 and 1890, Gertrude initially took up vocal studies and later switched to the cello, a slightly controversial instrument for a woman but rapidly becoming more common. Prior to her training at GSM, Gertrude must also have been taught piano, as in 1885 she performed a selection of piano solos as part of a concert led by Lindsay Sloper at the Brompton Hospital.<sup>539</sup> The hospital was founded in the nineteenth century and took in patients suffering from tuberculosis when many other hospitals turned them away because there was no cure. Organising concerts for those less fortunate was typical of musical middle- and upper-class women of the nineteenth century, who saw the opportunity to use their musical talents as a means towards moral and social improvement. Paula Gillett refers to these endeavours as part of the ‘woman’s mission’, which drew on traditionally female virtues that paradoxically, when centred on music, usually took form as a public event.<sup>540</sup> Significantly, she references an influential concert given by Alexandra, Princess of Wales (1844 – 1925) and her three daughters, also given at Brompton Hospital in February 1888, a few years later than Gertrude Swebstone took part in a similar performance.<sup>541</sup> During the 1880s it was still believed that tuberculosis was highly contagious, but that music, particularly singing, had the power to prevent and cure it. This was therefore a rather brave and selfless act from Gertrude, particularly prior to the encouragement of the royal family acting similarly. The Swebstone sisters continued in this charitable vein; in November 1895 Maude and Gertrude both performed in a concert in aid of the Winter Charity Fund held at All Saints’ Hall, Lower Clapton, alongside the Reverend Frank Taylor.<sup>542</sup> Both sisters also went on to join the South Place Orchestra in the early years, when other central members of the South Place concert committee were also members. Maude

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<sup>539</sup> "Miscellaneous Concerts, Intelligence, &c." *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* 26, no. 506 (1885): 225.

<sup>540</sup> Gillett, *Musical Women in England, 1870 – 1914: 'Encroaching on all Man's Privileges'*, 33 – 5. Angela Burdett-Coutts wrote an authoritative report titled *Woman's Mission* in 1893.

<sup>541</sup> *Ibid.*, 41 – 2.

<sup>542</sup> "Miscellaneous Notes." *Musical News* 9, no. 244 (2 Nov 1895): 362.

played viola along with Frank Hawkins, Gertrude performed cello alongside H. A. Hawkins, whilst A. J. Clements and E. J. Fairhall performed with the violinists.

Edith Swepstone began her composition studies at the GSM in 1885, age 23, with second study piano. Her first work was programmed in a student concert in the summer of that year, a song titled *Oh, thou art like a snowdrop*, for which Swepstone played the accompaniment.<sup>543</sup> Throughout her five years at GSM, Swepstone's music was featured regularly in the student concerts. Such experiences would have been invaluable to her later career, and may not have been available if she had studied at the more prestigious RCM, where women composers were not usually given the same sort of exposure.<sup>544</sup> The RAM and GSM were far more progressive in this respect, accepting many female composition students during the late nineteenth century. In the case of the GSM, this comparably female-friendly policy originated in its initial function as an institution for amateur musicians until 1910, allowing middle- and upper-class women musicians to be more easily accepted in this capacity.<sup>545</sup> Regardless, the GSM's approach provided Swepstone with an abundance of opportunities for her music to be heard by the public and reviewed in the press. At the second concert featuring Swepstone's music, this time a Sonata in A Major for Violin and Piano in November 1885, a new song *Forget Thee* by Frances Allitsen was also performed.<sup>546</sup> In contrast to Allitsen, a large part of Swepstone's output as a student was orchestral, although she did write some songs that were performed including *The Enchanted Jewel, Is he Sleeping?*, and *Loving Tears*.<sup>547</sup> Often Swepstone accompanied her own songs, which were performed by other students – never her sister but on occasion by women who went on to perform at the South Place concerts, such as Clara Robson.<sup>548</sup>

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<sup>543</sup> LMA/GSM: CLA/056/AD/03/001 - 018: Concert Programme, 17 June 1885. Performed by May Hallam.

<sup>544</sup> Seddon, *British Women Composers and Instrumental Chamber Music in the Early Twentieth Century*, 26 – 7.

<sup>545</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 – 22.

<sup>546</sup> LMA/GSM: CLA/056/AD/03/001 - 018: Concert Programme, 25 November 1885. Swepstone accompanied her own work again, violin played by Charlotte Wilkes.

<sup>547</sup> LMA/GSM: CLA/056/AD/03/008 - 010: Concert Programmes, 1886 – 1888. Performed 1886, 1887 and 1888 respectively.

<sup>548</sup> LMA/GSM: CLA/056/AD/03/001 - 018: Concert Programme, 31 October 1888. Clara Robson performed Swepstone's song *Loving Tears*.

Midway through her time at GSM, Swepstone also published her song *Tell Me Beloved* with Edwin Ashdown in 1895.<sup>549</sup> The reviews were varied. On the more positive side, *The Graphic* declared that 'a tenor [would find it] a melodious medium for declaring his love' and *The Leeds Mercury* described it as 'a sympathetic setting of a plaintive little love song'.<sup>550</sup> Although neither are raving reviews for her first publication, they are substantially kinder than the writer in *The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (Dublin), who slated it as 'poor and ineffective'.<sup>551</sup> Swepstone received similarly mixed reviews throughout her career. After performing her own Sonata for Piano in C $\sharp$  Minor, her orchestral works began to appear in the GSM programmes and gained more attention from the critics. The first, a minuet from a suite, was briefly described as 'piquant' in *The Musical Times*,<sup>552</sup> a slightly pale level of praise in comparison to William Strickland's 'extremely well written' Prelude and Fugue. Yet an intriguing review in *The Era* suggests that it was too derivative of another work and that Swepstone's music was not well received at all.<sup>553</sup> In contrast, a year later the Largo movement of her Orchestral Suite in G Minor was performed at a concert attended by the Lord and Lady Mayoress of London, and by all accounts was a success.<sup>554</sup> Even so, the *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* described it as a 'pretty' work – mild praise considering it was otherwise deemed to be successful.<sup>555</sup> Thankfully, this was not always the case. In 1889, the *Pall Mall Gazette* gave equal praise to works performed at a concert by Edith Swepstone and Joseph Speaight, believing them to show 'every token of encouragement for their future'.<sup>556</sup> Speaight did in fact go on to do well as a pianist, organist, composer and Professor at GSM and the Trinity College of Music, but like Swepstone, is now relatively unknown.

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<sup>549</sup> Swepstone, Edith. *Tell Me, Beloved*. London: Edwin Ashdown, 1895. British Library: Music collections: I.649.nn.(28.).

<sup>550</sup> "New Music." *The Graphic*, (15 September 1888): 26; "New Music." *Leeds Mercury* (19 September 1888): 3.

<sup>551</sup> *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (24 August 1888): 2.

<sup>552</sup> "Guildhall School of Music." *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* 29, no. 539 (1888): 25.

<sup>553</sup> 'The Minuet from a suite by Miss Edith Swepstone does credit to that young lady's memory, but its reception should encourage her to more original efforts' Anon. "Guildhall School of Music." *The Era* (10 December 1887): 10.

<sup>554</sup> "Guildhall School of Music." *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* 29, no. 550 (1888): 727.

<sup>555</sup> Anon. "Guildhall School of Music." *Lloyd's Weekly London Newspaper* (25 November 1888): 12.

<sup>556</sup> *The Pall Mall Gazette*, (9 December 1889): 6.

During her time at GSM, Edith Swepstone mainly studied with three professors. Her piano teacher was Thomas Ridley Prentice, who was also a theorist. For her primary study, composition, Swepstone studied firstly with Henry Charles Banister, and later also with Ebenezer Prout. Banister, who was a Professor at both GSM and the RAM, was better known for his theoretical work than his compositions, and several of his books and lectures were published prior to Swepstone finishing her education. (*Musical Art and Study; The Life of Sir George Macfarren; The Harmonising of Melodies; Interludes*).<sup>557</sup> Prout was a more prolific composer than Banister and was also an organist for nonconformist chapels, which may have had an influence on Swepstone. Among Prout's most successful students were Eugen d'Albert, Arthur Goring Thomas and Henry J. Wood. He wrote symphonies, choral works, organ sonatas and concertos, most of which were well received but rarely revived.<sup>558</sup> One of the main criticisms of Prout's compositional output was that his music suffered from rigid phrasing and a lack of originality, which chimes with a few critiques of Swepstone's early work. Prout's approach to composition is also documented through theoretical publications, including his book on instrumentation [1876] that influenced many twentieth-century composers. He also wrote individual books on topics such as harmony, form and the orchestra, and his influence can be seen in Swepstone's compositions. For example, her Minuet for String Orchestra follows all of the traditional approaches that are outlined in Banister and Prout's books and that one would expect from a student in her early training – it is most likely (but not yet confirmed) that this piece was written within her first few years as a student (see Example 3). The Minuet is a pleasant but predictable piece. It is in ternary form and made up of a minuet and trio section, each containing its own ABA structure. The returning minuet section is an almost exact repeat of the initial 40-bar minuet, with a shortened B section and an added coda. Both minuets stay firmly in the tonic C major, and the trio modulates to the dominant G major, with a lighter texture and melodies that derive from the minuet. Overall, it is a well-constructed piece that may have been part of a larger work, but its main significance is that the compositional techniques employed by Swepstone highlight the sort of conventional training that she received during her time at GSM. It confirms

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<sup>557</sup> Dibble, Jeremy and Maitland, J. A. Fuller. "Banister, Henry Charles" in *Oxford Music Online*. Last modified 2001. Accessed October 2018.

<sup>558</sup> Williamson, Rosemary. "Prout, Ebenezer" in *Oxford Music Online*. Last modified 20 January 2001. Accessed October 2018.

Evans' assertion that Swebstone was in some ways 'held back' by her musical training.<sup>559</sup> On the other hand, the Minuet thus helps to identify how her compositional style developed throughout her career, when she began to experiment more with Classical forms and establish a more sophisticated use of instrumentation.

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<sup>559</sup> Evans, "Modern British Composers", 130-131.

Example 3 - First page of Sweptstone's Minuet for String Orchestra, bars 1 – 18<sup>560</sup>

[illegible]

<sup>560</sup> Swebstone, Edith. Minuet for String Orchestra. Unpublished. Parkway Central Library (Philadelphia, US), Fleischer Collection: 481S

In 1890, Edith Swepstone took her exams and became one of the first students to gain a certificate as an associate of the GSM, only available to students who had studied for three years or more. She was also the only student to become an associate in composition before the twentieth century, the most common paths being piano, singing and violin. Swepstone was also commended for the Lady Jenkinson Prize, which was won by May Severn Tonge. After this Swepstone ceases to appear in the GSM programmes as a performer of her own or others' works, but a few new works appear, suggesting she was either still studying with her teachers, or that they were keen to keep promoting her work. The first was *Cavatina* for violin, the second a new song for horn, piano and voice. A rare example of her writing for wind instruments (in this case, for voice, horn and piano), the handwritten manuscript for *Elfland Echoes* still exists, having somehow made its way to the University of Melbourne library.<sup>561</sup> The music is set to Tennyson's *The Princess: The Splendour Falls on Castle Walls*, a poem that was also used by composers such as Britten, Delius, Holst and Vaughan Williams. Britten's version, *Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings* Op. 31, composed many years later in 1943, bears a striking resemblance to Swepstone's choice of instrumentation.<sup>562</sup>

Similarly to the Minuet, this piece shows the influence of her teachers. Prout's *Instrumentation* contains a section devoted to the use of wind instruments as an accompaniment to vocal music, referencing Haydn and Handel as successful examples. Many aspects of Prout's writing can be identified in the music, although Swepstone regularly goes against his advice. For a start, Prout is wary about using brass to accompany the voice at all, and asserts that it should be done with the utmost discretion and not to accompany a female voice, which will easily be overwhelmed. Not only did Swepstone write for an alto/mezzo voice, she also broke Prout's rule of ensuring a balance between the parts by keeping the brass at a quiet dynamic in order to let the vocal melody come through. This is not to say she does not acknowledge her teacher's advice: the song starts with the melody being passed between the horn and

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<sup>561</sup> This may be linked to the fact that the library of the SWM was sent to Australia after the organisation disbanded in the 1970s. Swepstone, Edith. *Elfland Echoes*. Unpublished. 1890 (?). University of Melbourne Library, Barry Tuckwell Collection: Music RB: TUCK 0143 (Bund220110127). Performed at the GSM student's concert 12 November 1890 by Emily Briggs (voice), Hale (horn) and Swepstone (piano). LMA/GSM: CLA/056/AD/03/001 - 018: Concert Programmes, 1879 – 1910.

<sup>562</sup> Britten, Benjamin. *Serenade for tenor solo, horn and strings*, Op. 31. London: Boosey & Hawkes, 1944.



the voice, often in a call and response style, and otherwise with the horn playing sustained notes at piano/pianissimo in order not to obscure the voice. Yet, as the song builds towards the end and the climax of the music, the horn plays an accompanying melody to the voice at forte, that both echoes and challenges the prominence of the singer in a way that mirrors the lyrics 'our echoes roll from soul to soul and grow for ever and forever' (Example 4, bars 64 – 74). As the music itself grows into the final chorus, Swepstone adds to the horn's power by placing it above the voice in terms of pitch – another breach of Prout's suggestions – but she adds reinforcement to the vocal lines by echoing it across three octaves in the piano part, so that the horn's role becomes more harmonic than melodic. The horn then returns to 'piano' and to its place in the call and response (over the words 'answer echoes answer'), as the Tennyson's words 'dying dying dying' end the song. The song was performed at the GSM after she had left, suggesting that her teachers, Banister and Prout, were happy with the music, and considering *Instrumentation* was written over a decade prior to *Elfland Echoes*, it is likely that Prout's ideas had developed slightly. Furthermore, as Prout himself wrote, there are exceptions to every rule, especially among the greats, and perhaps Swepstone felt ready to push those boundaries.

- 4 -

grandioso

e- ver Our e- choes roll.. from soul to soul - and grow - - - for

63

f

f

71

Trio I

e- ver and for e- ver Blow bugle blow set the wild echoes

Trio I

f

f

rall.

flying and answer echoes answer dying dying dying

78

p

p

rall.

<sup>563</sup> Swepstone, *Elfland Echoes*. Unpublished. 1890 (?), 4. University of Melbourne Library, Barry Tuckwell Collection: Music RB: TUCK 0143 (Bund220110127).

It has already been noted throughout this chapter that some of Swepstone's peers from GSM went on to be associated with the South Place Sunday Popular Concerts. In addition to Frances Allitsen and Clara Robson, Swepstone's time as a student coincided with several other future colleagues, whose paths she crossed in different ways. Josephine Troup also studied at GSM and her compositions were performed at student concerts in July 1886, during Swepstone's time as a student.<sup>564</sup> Another woman who not only performed at South Place but also acted on the concert committee was Minnie Sumner. She studied the piano at GSM and performed in a concert alongside Swepstone, who was performing the premiere of her own piano composition, *Impromptu*.<sup>565</sup> William Varian also studied at GSM and went on to become an active member of the South Place concert committee. Kate Augusta Davies also had a strong association with both institutions; after studying at GSM and acting as their most regular accompanist she then went on to be the main accompanist at South Place for several years. Like Swepstone, Davies also became an associate of the school in 1891, meaning they must have spent at least four years studying together, albeit with different principal studies. However, they both studied piano, and Davies played the viola for at least two of Swepstone's orchestral premieres. Likewise, Richard Walthew and John Saunders studied at GSM during this period and performed in the same concerts as Davies. Saunders was the principal violinist and Walthew a violist for Swepstone's *Largo in D* in 1888 and her *Symphony in G Minor* the following year.<sup>566</sup>

Thus, it appears that the students during this period used the opportunity to build important networks that came to be crucial to the direction of their later careers. Swepstone clearly built some close relationships that lasted into later life. More immediately after her time at GSM, the 1891 census shows that both Edith and Gertrude were visiting the Murray family in Hampstead. Among the resident family was Louise Murray, who became a licentiate of the RAM and was listed as a Professor. Murray had studied with Ridley Prentice at the same time as Swepstone and was

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<sup>564</sup> *The Fountain mingles with the River* and *Love's Devotion* were both sung by Evan Jones and accompanied by the composer on 7 July 1886. LMA/GSM: CLA/056/AD/03/001 - 018: Concert Programmes, 1879 – 1910.

<sup>565</sup> Concert programme: 23 Jan 1889. LMA/GSM: CLA/056/AD/03/001 - 018: Concert Programmes, 1879 – 1910.

<sup>566</sup> Concert programmes: 17 Nov 1888 and 7 December 1889. CLA/056/AD/03/001 - 018: Concert Programmes, 1879 – 1910.

reported to be a remarkable pianist.<sup>567</sup> In terms of career, Swebstone followed up her student years with a wide variety of opportunities in London. Continuing to use her GSM links, in 1894 she gave a lecture in Clapton on behalf of the North East London Society of Musicians, of which Prout was the Society's president. The two-hour lecture on the subject of Beethoven was filled with instrumental illustrations of the piano sonatas by Edith and her sisters, Gertrude and Maude. It was reported a success by *The Musical Standard* and was possibly the first of many lectures that Swebstone went on to give on musical topics.<sup>568</sup>

Although there were possibly many more concerts that went unreported, the only instance of Swebstone performing music that was not her own in this period was as the piano soloist with the Ladies' Orchestral Society in Sunderland, conducted by the composer and organist George Frederick Vincent (1855 – 1928).<sup>569</sup> Performances of her compositions across the UK were much more varied. She was often included in programmes that were purposefully representing modern British composers. For example, a new symphony by Swebstone was accepted by Norfolk Megone to be performed at one of the 100 concerts given by the Grand Orchestra in Eastbourne in 1891. Other new music included was by André Wormser and Granville Bantock, with the aim of adding interest to the season alongside more traditional repertoire.<sup>570</sup> Swebstone's symphony must have been reasonably well received by the audience, as another new work by her was programmed in the same series in 1893.<sup>571</sup> In a similar vein, Swebstone's music reappeared several times at the chamber music concerts of the Musical Artists' Society in London, which began in 1924 and were usually held in Princes' Hall and St Martin's Hall. As an amateur organisation, their principal aim was to offer new composers the opportunity to have their works performed and likewise to give performers the chance to perform in front of a large public audience. A relatively

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<sup>567</sup> *The Musical World* (May 7 1887). Contains a review of pianist Louisa Murray giving her first concert at Wanstead on 28 April 1887, when she performed Chopin's Scherzo in B♭ Minor: 'marked by a command of technical resources, an intellectual grasp of the composer's meaning, and a sympathetic rendering of the delicate nuances of time and touch quite unusual at the first appearance of an artist. Her refinement and clear musical phrasing were, perhaps, even more apparent in the second solo, Heller's 'La Truite'.'

<sup>568</sup> "North East London Society of Musicians." *Musical Standard* 46, no. 9 (3 March 1894): 191.

<sup>569</sup> "Public Announcements." *Sunderland Daily Echo and Shipping Gazette*, 18 December 1890: 2.

<sup>570</sup> *The Athenaeum*, (12 August 1893): 236-236.

<sup>571</sup> "Eastbourne." *Musical Standard* 41, no. 1408 (25 July 1891): 65.

high number of women had their new compositions performed during the series.<sup>572</sup> Performances of Swepstone's works included the Quintet in D for wind instruments (1891), Trio in C (1895) and Piano Quintet in F Minor (1896). Little was reported on the first Quintet, quite surprisingly as a wind quintet was a fairly unusual feature in the Society's programmes.<sup>573</sup> The latter two, however, received mixed reviews. A review was written about the Trio in *The Musical Standard* that is revealing of the attitudes of the day and the challenges that Swepstone and her peers faced as women. The same concert featured a new piece by Walthew, and this particular reviewer did not make much of either of the future South Place members' music. However, the way in which he reviewed both pieces are of a distinctly different nature. Regarding Walthew's Four Meditations for Clarinet and Piano, the critic opined:

In our opinion Mr Egerton's performance was more interesting in its warmth of tone and skilfulness than was the composition itself. Brahms has considerably influenced the making of this music... Originality is, broadly speaking, a growth; it does not at all invariably reveal itself at first.<sup>574</sup>

It is uncomplimentary, but hopeful for the composer who showed potential at this early stage in his career. On the other hand, Swepstone, who had studied alongside Walthew, received less enthusiastic advice:

The other novelty, a Trio in C minor, by Miss Swepstone, is weaker altogether. It has a sort of grace and fancy; but these qualities – which are common enough – do not go very far towards the making of a serious work of art. Miss Swepstone will probably do far better in lighter composition where demands are made that more accord with her talent and ability.<sup>575</sup>

Unfortunately, the Trio is among the multiple chamber works by Swepstone that have been lost, so it is impossible to say whether such a dismissal of the music was

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<sup>572</sup> Fuller, "Women composers during the British Musical Renaissance 1880 – 1918.", 96 – 7.

<sup>573</sup> Combination of instruments is not listed in the programme and the work does not appear in any other programmes. "Miscellaneous Concerts, Intelligence, &c." *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* 32, no. 578 (1891): 232.

<sup>574</sup> "The Musical Artists' Society." *Musical Standard* 3, no. 69 (27 April 1895): 335.

<sup>575</sup> Ibid.

warranted or not. Yet regardless of the quality of the music, the reviewer's thoughts are obviously clouded by his perception of Swepstone as a woman composer. Whether or not it was intentional, using phrases such as 'weaker' and 'grace and fancy' were at the time synonymous with women's general status in society, and subsequently his review implies to a degree that women's music is not worthy of serious consideration. The reviewer's suggestion that Swepstone should turn to 'lighter music' to align with her 'talent and ability', is incredibly derogatory, by inferring that Swepstone's potential would only stretch to music that demanded less attention from listeners and critics. There is no consideration that Swepstone may progress in the way that Walthew might. The review suggests that Walthew will grow and work towards a bright future as a composer; Swepstone should regress and return to the confines of her limited abilities.

The multiple reviews of Swepstone's quintet in 1896 provide a more varied perspective. The writer for *The Athenaeum* merely noted that the composer had played the piano in the ensemble and that the music had been written 'apparently to some extent under the influence of Brahms'.<sup>576</sup> Although it is not necessarily a negative comment, it correlates to earlier reviews about her Minuet being derived from the work of other composers. These sorts of comparisons become less common throughout the years, indicating that as she gained experience she naturally progressed to writing more original music. However, it is noticeable that her male peers writing chamber music at the time do not seem to receive as many comparisons in the same reviews. Often critics drew on the work of notable male composers as a vehicle through which to discuss Swepstone's compositions. In contrast, the writer for the *Musical News* engaged with Swepstone's quintet on a more focused level:

The work is furnished with pleasant themes, but little invention is shown in their development, and there is a lack of power throughout its whole course. The instruments are written for in a scholarly way, only their respective parts are too much sectionised, rather than made conversational, and this gives the work a patchwork effect. The pianoforte part is thick and is not written so freely as one would expect from a pianist.

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<sup>576</sup> *The Athenaeum*, 2 May 1896.

Still, the quintet as a whole is a creditable piece of work, and in all probability its author will do still better.<sup>577</sup>

In this case, the reviewer has still used language that implies some inferiority in the composition, particularly with the phrases 'little invention' and 'lack of power'. However, the reviewer has justified his criticisms with closer reference to the music itself and is not entirely negative. It also ends on a positive note for the composer's future, directly opposite of the previous review. Another review by *The Musical Times* described it as 'a well-written and effective work' that contributed to the general improvement of the recent concerts.<sup>578</sup> It seems that overall, Swepstone's work divided opinion.

Between the publication of *Tell Me, Beloved* in 1895 and her association with South Place, Edith Swepstone continued to publish her compositions. These were mainly songs, which do not reflect the form of compositions she chose to write at GSM when she had the freedom to experiment in any genre. This is likely because, as a woman, Swepstone had more opportunity to publish songs and solo pieces than ensemble works, songs being an acceptable genre for women in Britain by the 1900s. This was partly influenced by the success of a few women who excelled at song writing, several of whom were regulars on the South Place programmes. Frances Allitsen was one of these women, but equally prominent composers during this period were Maude Valérie White (1855 – 1937), Liza Lehmann (1862 – 1918), Mary Carmichael (1851 – 1935) and Alicia A. Needham (1872 – 1945). It is worth considering the careers of these women, both as the contemporaries of Swepstone and to place them in the context of the South Place concerts.

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<sup>577</sup> "London Concerts." *Musical News* 10, no. 270 (2 May 1896): 412.

<sup>578</sup> "Miscellaneous Concerts, Intelligence, &c." *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* 37, no. 640 (1896): 406.

### 8.3 Songs

Table 6 – Songs by Edith Swepstone.

<b>Song</b>	<b>Words</b>	<b>Publisher</b>	<b>Year</b>
<i>A Song of Twilight</i>	A. R. Aldrich	Edwin Ashdown & Co.	1897
<i>Autumn Leaves</i> (Two-part song)	E. Swepstone	G. A. Holmes & F. J. Karn	1910
<i>Bells Across the Snow</i> (Three-part song for female voice and piano)	F. R. Havergal	Augener & Co.	1895
<i>Break, Break, Break</i>	Alfred L. Tennyson	Laudy & Co.	1908
<i>Caprice</i>	Kathleen E. Royds	Laudy & Co.	1914
<i>Daisy's Song</i>	J. Keats	Stainer & Bell	1909
<i>Foreshadowings</i> (Voice and cello)	E. Swepstone	Augener & Co.	1892
<i>Golden Gorse</i> (Two-part song)	H. G. Hurst	G. A. Holmes & F. J. Karn	1909
<i>I Worship Thee Yet</i>	Heinrich Heine	Augener & Co.	1892
<i>Is He Sleeping?</i>	E. M. Rutherford	Boosey & Co.	1886
<i>Just You and I</i>	M. Nepean	Edwin Ashdown Ltd.	1900
<i>Keen Bows the Wind Upon Clebrig's Side</i> (four-part song)	W. Black	Augener & Co.	1892
<i>Laughing Song</i> (Two-part song for female chorus and piano)	William Blake	G. A. Holmes & F. J. Karn	1911
<i>Love Flew in at the Window</i>	A. Tennyson	Laudy & Co.	1908
<i>May-time</i>	Julia Binfield	Collard Moutrie	1921
<i>Mis' Lillie: A Song of South Carolina</i>	Verna Akerberg	J. B. Cramer & Co. Ltd.	1934
<i>My Lady's Gown</i>	Anon.	Chappell & Co.	1897
<i>Oh, Sleep a Little While, White Pearl</i>	John Keats	Stainer & Bell	1909
<i>Shadows of Parting</i> (Three-part song)	K. E. Royds	Weekes & Co.	1915
<i>Songs for Children</i>	Robert L. Stephenson	J. Curwen & Sons	1897
<i>Renunciation</i>	K. E. Royds	Laudy & Co.	1914
<i>Rock-a-by-Lady</i>	E. Field	Chappell & Co.	1897
<i>Shadows of Parting</i> (Three-part song)	K. E. Royds	Weekes & Co.	1915
<i>Slumber Sweetly, Baby Mine</i>	E. Swepstone	Augener & Co.	1893
<i>Sunbeams Thro' Her Lattice Peep</i>	E. Swepstone	Edwin Ashdown Ltd.	1897
<i>The Birth of the Daffodils</i> (Two-part song)	M. Mitchell	G. A. Holmes & F. J. Karn	1910
<i>The Call</i> (Two-part song)	K. E. Royds	Weekes & Co.	1910
<i>The Crocuses' Lament</i> (Two-part song)	E. Swepstone	G. A. Holmes & F. J. Karn	1909



<i>The Hill</i>	K. E. Royds	Weekes & Co.	1914
<i>The Return of Prosperine</i> (Three-part song)	K. E. Royds	Weekes & Co.	1915
<i>The Throstle Song</i>	A. L. Tennyson	Augener & Co.	1896
<i>The Quest</i>	K. E. Royds	Laudy & Co.	1914
<i>Under the Lattice</i> (Serenade with cello obbligato)	Noel Paton	Metzler & Co.	1894

Not many of Swepstone's songs were performed through South Place in comparison to her significant output of published works. Coming from a wealthy family, it was clearly not out of financial need that she wrote songs specifically for publishing, and from the way she promoted her instrumental work it is unlikely that songs were her preferred genre. It is more likely that Swepstone saw her songs as a route into publishing and appealing to the market of domestic music-makers, helping her to sustain a presence in the London musical scene after her studies.

The four that were performed at South Place, presumably at Swepstone's influence, were *The Rock a by Lady* and *The Throstle* (performed in 1899) and *Two stars* and *Light in Hades* (performed 1910).<sup>579</sup> In 1899, Swepstone was very present at the Society through her position on the committee. The two songs had both been published within the past couple of years, so the performances at South Place may have helped to promote sales. Swepstone accompanied the songs herself, which were sung by Edith Hensler, who had previously performed other songs by female composers.<sup>580</sup> Reviews of another performance of *The Throstle* (published 1896, based on Tennyson's poem of the same name) complimented the advantage it gave to the singer's voice.<sup>581</sup> Speculatively, this is not because of the range of the vocal line (C4 – G5), but because the conversational nature of the poem allows for a spectrum of expression. The first verse of the poem begins with the singing voice of the bird, who proclaims 'Summer is coming, I know it...', but soon a more cynical voice interjects and the remaining three verses reveal a more pessimistic outlook towards the hope that a new season brings, believing that nothing is really new. The last lines: 'Summer is coming, is coming my

<sup>579</sup> SPES: Concert programmes: *The Rock a by Lady* and *The Throstle*: 17<sup>th</sup> concert of the 13<sup>th</sup> season, 29 January 1899; *Two stars* and *Light in Hades*: 5<sup>th</sup> concert of the 25<sup>th</sup> season, 30 October 1910.

<sup>580</sup> Such as *Irish Lullaby* by Alicia A Needham. SPES: Concert programme. 17<sup>th</sup> concert of the 13<sup>th</sup> season, 29 January 1899.

<sup>581</sup> Another good reception of the song was at a concert in Bisley: "Grand Concerts at Bisley." *Stroud News and Gloucestershire Advertiser*, (15 January 1897): 6.

dear, and all the winters are hidden', suggest that darkness is concealed, but it is still coming – a bleak outlook, particularly in a time when, as Kathryn Ledbetter has highlighted in her analyses of Tennyson's poetry, everything was contextualised by the general sense of progress and the industrial revolution.<sup>582</sup> Members of the Ethical Society in particular were constantly looking for ways for society to progress, but their discussions also reflect a certain level of awareness about problems in the world. The song is also relevant in its references to the new year, as the concert was held in January, so an ideal time of year for reflection.

In response to the song, a reviewer in *The Musical News* wrote: 'We question if it is advisable to set Tennyson's poem 'The Throstle' to music. It is so genuinely music in itself that the addition is rather like gilding on burnished gold'.<sup>583</sup> Such a concern is reminiscent of similar attitudes towards Lehmann's *In a Persian Garden*. Yet both women managed to prove that they were very capable of such a challenge. Lehmann's song cycle received international success. Sweptstone's reviewer continued: '...but waiving this consideration, we have nothing but praise for Miss Sweptstone's tender song which has caught the spirit of the poem most happily'.<sup>584</sup> She was not the only composer of her day to set the popular poem to music; Agnes Helen Lambert wrote her own *The Throstle* in 1907, and White published a version in 1890, just one year after the poem was published in *The New Review*. There are some fundamental similarities between White and Sweptstone's interpretations of the piece. Both are written in a lively 6/8 and have rapid accompaniments in the piano part. However the harmonic and melodic treatment of the words are quite different. *The Monthly Musical Record* described Sweptstone's version as an 'unconventional' song, with a 'chaste' melody and 'characteristic' accompaniment.<sup>585</sup> The melody is simple both tonally (C major) and rhythmically, matching the light rhythm of the spoken words. It is particularly cheerful in the first verse, spoken from the perspective of the optimistic throstle, but as the poem's protagonist cuts in, a C ♯ that takes longer to resolve than previous chromatic notes changes the mood. The same passage forms the penultimate

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<sup>582</sup> Ledbetter, Kathryn. *Tennyson and Victorian Periodicals: Commodities in Context*. Reprint. (London: Routledge, 2016), 99.

<sup>583</sup> "Reviews" *Musical News* 11, no. 285 (15 August 1896): 152.

<sup>584</sup> Ibid.

<sup>585</sup> "The Throstle." *The Monthly Musical Record* 26, no. 307 (July 1896): 153.

bar of the song, with the C ♯ reinforcing the uncertainty that is felt by the speaker. At the second verse, the accompaniment also makes a sudden change from sweeping arpeggios to a high, soft trill (a reminder of the thrush perhaps) and there is a brief canon between the voice and the piano, introducing a more conversational nature between the parts (see Example 6). Other interjections in the accompaniment come at 'new, new, new, new!' and 'never a prophet so crazy!', where the exclamations are marked by chords adorned with grace notes and chromaticism, including the return of the C ♯. Texturally, harmonically and rhythmically the song has become less stable from the opening 'summer is coming' to the final two statements of the same phrase at the end of the song. In particular, the semiquaver chords add a sense of heaviness to the music that has not previously been present (Example 7). To the keen listener, the sense of loss in the song may have captured the feeling of religious doubt and uncertainty among the Ethical Society's members. On the other hand, the upbeat melody may have simply been acting as a bit of light relief following the intensity of Dvorak's *Serenade in E*, Op. 22, which preceded Sweptstone's songs in the programme. Overall, the song is conventional enough to fit safely within the genre of songs written by women composers, and is much less daring than some of her instrumental works, perhaps where she felt she had more leeway to experiment, as her songs were expected to be written so that musically literate middle-class women could purchase and perform the songs in their own homes. Furthermore, the song genre had already been very much defined by her contemporaries and had clear remits and expectations. However, among the brightness and hopefulness of the tune, the piano provides a melancholic atmosphere that strikes well with the poem, and shows a very different interpretation to White's.

Example 5 - Sweptstone's *The Throstle*, bars 7 – 8<sup>586</sup>

Soprano Solo

*cresc.*

Sum - - - mer is com - ing, I

Piano

Example 6 – Sweptstone's *The Throstle*, bars 14 – 18

po - et

*rit.*

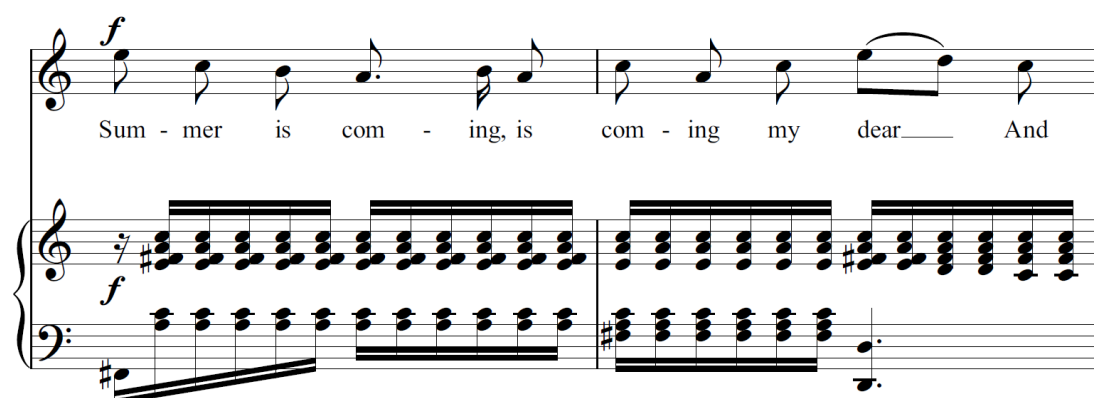
*p*

Sing the New Year in un-der the blue; Last year you sang it as

*p a tempo*

<sup>586</sup> Sweptstone, Edith. *The Throstle*. London: Augener & Co, 1896. British Library: Music Collections: G.805.cc.(53.)

Example 7 - Sweptstone's *The Throstle*, bars 56 – 57



In her reflections on Tennyson's poem, Ledbetter describes a childishness in the language and rhythm, which is captured in both Sweptstone and White's music.<sup>587</sup> Perhaps for this reason, Sweptstone's song was described with words such as 'little', 'pretty' and 'grace' – feminine words but arguably also appropriate to the song.<sup>588</sup> *Rock a by Lady*, based on a poem by Eugene Field, has a more blatant childishness, and was even further disregarded as a 'rather ordinary' song that was sung 'very sweetly' by Helen Trust during one of the St James's Ballad Concerts.<sup>589</sup> Written as a lullaby, *Rock a By Lady* is not a complicated song, but arguably *The Daily Telegraph* too quickly dismissed it. The poem tells of a lady who brings flowers of dreams to those asleep, and is set to a lilting melody with an oscillating piano accompaniment. As one would expect from a nineteenth-century lullaby, it does not challenge the ear, but there are some subtleties to the composition that make it worthy of its performance at South Place. For example, the constant rhythm in the piano is only interrupted at the first line of the final verse, where the singer addresses the listener for the first time asking 'would you dream', and the sustained chord gives the sense of being suspended in a dream. Then as the dynamics increase in the final verse, the music reaches a climax as the opening line returns, but this time it is emphasised by doubling in the piano, before the song softly fades away. It may not be a ground-breaking piece of music, but it is a well-constructed song that in 1897 was performed in Southampton, Queen's Gate, Henley, Freshwater, Shanklin, Newport, Bembridge and Ryde. Chappell & Co (the

<sup>587</sup> Ledbetter, Kathryn. *Tennyson and Victorian Periodicals: Commodities in Context*, 99.

<sup>588</sup> "Augener and Co." *Musical Standard* 5, no. 129 (20 June 1896): 401; "The Throstle." *The Monthly Musical Record* 26, no. 307 (July 1896): 153.

<sup>589</sup> *The Daily Telegraph*, 18 November 1897.

publishers) clearly saw it as a song worth promoting, although whether it was successful or not is more difficult to gauge.

Example 8 - Swepstone's *Rock a by Lady*, bars 34 – 36 <sup>590</sup>

Would you dream all these dreams that are ti - ny and fleet? They'll

Example 9 - Swepstone's *Rock a by Lady*, bars 1 – 6

The Rock - a - by La - dy from Hush - a - by Street, Comes

<sup>590</sup> Swepstone, Edith. *Rock a by Lady*. London: Chappell & Co, 1897. British Library: Music collections: H.1798.jj.(53.)

Example 10 - Swepstone's Rock a by Lady, bars 41 – 42



On the other hand, neither *Two stars* and *Light in Hades* appear to have been published and currently there seems to be no existing copy of the music. Therefore, their performances at South Place in 1910 would not have been to promote the music for sale purposes. Swepstone may have seen South Place as an opportunity to showcase the music, with the hope that the songs would be published the same year as her other songs 'The Call' and 'The Birth of the Daffodils' (both published by Weekes & Co.). Between 1886 and 1915, Swepstone had at least thirty-four songs published, and probably wrote many more that were only performed or remained in her own hands.<sup>591</sup> Many are similar to *Rock a by Lady* and *The Throstle*, although others are written for several parts and multiple voices, such as 'Laughing Song' which is a two-part song written for female chorus and piano. Her beautifully illustrated collection of *Songs for Children* written to the words of Robert Louis Stevenson also stand out as a distinct example of her song repertoire, as most of her music was written as a single piece and clearly aimed at an adult audience. Occasionally Edith Swepstone wrote the words to her own songs, examples being 'The Crocuses' Lament', 'Foreshadowings' and 'Slumber Sweetly, Baby Mine'.<sup>592</sup> Other texts that Swepstone chose to set show that she was influenced by the same writers as many of her contemporaries, such as Tennyson, Keats and Blake. Some particularly interesting examples of her songs include 'Time Enough' and 'Body and Soul', both set to words by Robert Browning,

<sup>591</sup> Her song publishers include: Augener & Co.; Reid Brothers; Laudy & Co.; Boosey; Edwin Ashdown Ltd; Chappell; Weekes & Co.; J Curwen & Sons; Stainer & Bell; and Metzler & Co.

<sup>592</sup> Swepstone, Edith. *Foreshadowings*. London: Augener & Co., 1892. British Library: Music collections: G.807.i.(42.); Swepstone, Edith. *Slumber Sweetly, Baby Mine*. London: Augener & Co., 1893. British Library: Music collections: G.805.cc.(50.); Swepstone, Edith. *The Crocuses' Lament*. London: G. A. Holmes and F. J. Karn, 1909. British Library: E.281.

who also notably had a close connection with South Place earlier in the nineteenth century, through a connection with William J. Fox. This also points to the observation that none of Swepstone's published songs were particularly religious (unlike Allitsen), suggesting that her connection with the Ethical Society ran deeper than just the opportunities offered to her musically. Other poets who inspired Swepstone's songs are less well known today.<sup>593</sup> As can be seen in Table 6, this includes a notable amount of poetry by British Quaker and joint chair of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Kathleen E. Royds (1883 – 1967).

Whilst the songs were clearly an important part of Swepstone's published output, they were by no means her most significant compositions, nor are they the main contributions that connect her to South Place. The songs are also not what differentiate Swepstone as a unique composer of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and a better glimpse of this can be seen in other documentation that is now kept at Conway Hall.

#### 8.4 Ethical Hymn Music

In addition to her participation in the concerts, Swepstone also wrote many secular hymns that featured in hymn books used in ethical societies across the UK. Swepstone contributed four hymns to the *Ethical Hymn Book with Music* issued by the council of the Union of Ethical Societies.<sup>594</sup> She also contributed to Kennedy Scott's *Social Worship*, with a hymn called 'Out from the heart of nature'.<sup>595</sup> The words were taken from a poem called 'The Problem' written by the American philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson (1802 – 1882), who had been a key influence on the founder of the Ethical movement, Felix Adler, and clearly was liked by Swepstone. The complete poem reads as an explanation from Emerson about why he chose to leave the ministry, and may have provided inspiration and comfort to those in the congregation who had chosen to seek out ethics over religion. It is not negative about religion, but the poem expresses

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<sup>593</sup> These include: F. R. Havergal, Walter Besant, Walter Pollock, H. G. Hurst, E. M. Rutherford, M. Nepean, W. Black, M. Mitchell, E. Field and A. R. Aldrich.

<sup>594</sup> Hymns: 38, 45, 105 and 277. Coit, Stanton, O'Neill, Norman and Spiller, Stanton, *Ethical Hymn Book with Music*, 1905.

<sup>595</sup> Coit, Stanton and Scott, Charles Kennedy. *Social Worship for use in families, schools and churches*, 146. Hymn number 188 'Out from the heart of nature', words by Emerson, music by Swepstone (listed in index).



that the writer feels that traditional Christianity is not the route for him. The opening stanza shows this: 'I like a church, I like a cowl/... Yet not for all his faith can see/ Would I that cowed churchman be'. However, Swepstone has taken out any lines written in first person and direct references to the church, meaning the opening stanza and the end of the poem are not sung. Therefore, the poem has more of a focus on nature and the achievements of humans, referencing the Parthenon, the pyramids and England's abbeys. It is likely that many members of the ethical congregation would have known the poem and understood its message, and thus could have sung it as proudly as the music is written. However, the book claims to be written for 'families, schools and churches', and it is unlikely that a poem celebrating worship free from religion would have been included in a Christian church service.

Swepstone also wrote five hymns for the heavily debated *Hymns of Modern Thought*, compiled by Josephine Troup, and is given special thanks for being one of eight musicians who wrote special music for the book.<sup>596</sup> As she is not listed as providing music for free or a nominal fee, it can be understood that South Place paid Swepstone for writing the new hymns and they were submitted under her copyright. Swepstone's hymns in this collection include:

105 The things that are more excellent (William Watson)

113 True Victors (Anon.)

130 Of all the myriad moods of mind (James Russell Lowell)

150 The morning light flingeth (Frances R. Havergal)

197 Worship the Might-be in ev'ry being (Grace H. Baker)

Presuming Swepstone chose the inspirations for her compositions, and not Troup, the poems reveal a few more of Swepstone's literary and philosophical influences. Born only a few years before Swepstone, William Watson was a popular English poet who was known for his controversial political writing.<sup>597</sup> Watson's poem 'The things that are more excellent' (1912) is a celebration of the beauty of the world and humanity that

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<sup>596</sup> Troup, Josephine. *Hymns of Modern Thought*, 1912. Other women in this list are Florence Marshall and Mary B Elliott.

<sup>597</sup> Nelson, James, G. "Watson, Sir John William" in *Dictionary of National Biography*, September 2004.

one can appreciate more with age; freedom, liberty and friendship are exalted alongside 'the gains of science' and 'gifts of art' as key aspects of secular worship. There are, in fact, three other hymns put under the subject heading 'The things that are more excellent'. Other headings that group hymns together include ideals such as 'Truth' and 'The Power of Goodness' and occasions such as 'Morning' and 'Welcoming of a Child', so the poem's title as a category is suggestive that this hymn was considered a significant one in the collection. The final stanza of the poem opens with imagery that connects nature to music: 'In faultless rhythm of the ocean rolls/A rapturous silence thrills the skies', thus lending itself well to a musical setting and South Place's dedication to music as way of connecting the rational to the emotional. Although the original hymn appeals to 'O God' in the last few lines, Swepstone changes it to 'O world', putting fate into the power of the earth rather than an almighty being. Hymn 130 set to words by Lowell under the category of 'Aspiration', is also adapted to avoid references to God, taking the first half of stanza two and following it with the second half of stanza 3, omitting passages about immortal souls and God. It also avoids the line 'with our poor earthward striving', thus avoiding the negativity that sometimes arises in Christian hymns and becomes a more uplifting hymn. Lowell was also an abolitionist, therefore tying in with South Place's history. Swepstone was also careful to choose secular words by Havergal, who wrote a wide selection of Christian hymns.

### **8.5 Chamber music at South Place and beyond**

There are many things that make Swepstone a distinct figure at South Place. Whilst White, Lehmann, Verne-Bredt and many others had music performed there and sometimes performed themselves, Swepstone's influence stretched much further. The first note of her involvement with the Sunday Concerts does not appear until 21 February 1897, when Swepstone played the piano for her Quintet for Piano, Violins, Viola and Cello in F Minor, in an ensemble with John Saunders (first violin), as well as Archibald Evans, Thomas Batty and W. C Hann.<sup>598</sup> It is likely that Swepstone's former peer from GSM, John Saunders, had a large influence over her music being included in the programme, although in agreement with the committee and Swepstone herself. Unfortunately, no score or recording of the 26-minute long work can currently be found, however, the programme notes give an idea of what the piece may have

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<sup>598</sup> SPES: Concert Programme. 20<sup>th</sup> concert of the 11<sup>th</sup> season, 21 February 1897.

sounded like. As is the case for many more of Swepstone's works, the programme notes are one of the best representations of the music that can be found. The F Minor Quintet is constructed through four movements, the first of which (the Allegro non troppo) is described in the most detail. The character of the opening theme is described as restless and agitated, whilst the move to the subtonic minor for the second theme also brings a more tranquil character. The following movement (Adagio) is said to express a mood of 'sorrowful questioning' with the occasional hint at 'ultimate peace'. In contrast, the Scherzo is 'bright and playful' and the Trio was described as rhythmically resembling a Spanish dance treated with contrapuntal devices. The final movement has moments of rapid brilliance contrasted with a 'suave and dreamy' second subject, and the work ends with a peaceful conclusion.

Rather than the music itself, the most striking part of the brief analysis is how it is written in comparison to the other instrumental pieces on the programme. It is rather noticeable that Swepstone's name is not used throughout the four short paragraphs, whereas Beethoven and Schubert are mentioned regularly both as great composers and as personalities whose characters are highly relevant to the music. For example, the writer claims that Schubert's 'most original and beautiful' Quartet in A Minor has a 'lovely theme' and is 'wonderfully characteristic of its composer, whose life is reflected in his music...'.<sup>599</sup> The description of Swepstone's quintet is detailed analytically, but does not even contain references to 'the composer' like the other two; the writer treats the music more like an independent piece of work than the labour of an individual. Similarly to the Schubert notes, the description of Beethoven's piano solo (Op. 53) also contains more personal feelings towards the music, describing it as 'most perfect'. Both Schubert and Beethoven are placed historically and contextually, whereas there is no mention of Swepstone's career or any reference to the fact that this is a new piece of music, despite the exposure of new music being one of the chief aims of the Concert Committee. Max Bruch's (1838 – 1920) modern violin solo in the same programme is not even accorded programme notes.

Over a decade later, a second work by Swepstone written for the same instrumental ensemble was programmed, a Quintet in E Minor performed by Walthew, Woodhouse,

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<sup>599</sup> Ibid.

Yonge, Crabbe and as before, John Saunders, who appears to have been a strong advocate of her work, performing many of her compositions.<sup>600</sup> Unusually for such a long work, the 33-minute quintet did not receive programme notes for its first performance, but they were included when the work was performed again in 1909, also by Walthew, Saunders, Parsons, Yonge and Crabbe. In this instance, the handwritten notes on the programme were written by Helen Mary Fairhall (the Hon. Secretary) and show that Swepstone's piece only lasted 10 minutes, indicating that this time only one of the movements was performed. Nevertheless, the programme notes cover the whole work, suggesting that the entire work was planned to be performed, at least initially. It is possible that this decision was overridden upon realising the final piece in the programme; Brahms' Quintet in F Minor, Op. 34, was going to be over an hour long. Brahms' quintet is described as 'remarkable' and puts the work in the context of his oeuvre as one of his early works containing 'one of the finest movements ever penned' by the composer. Similar context is given to Schumann's piano solo in the same programme, but again, the notes for Swepstone's music are brief, yet highly analytical. Comments such as '...and as is usual in first movements, both themes are used in the development section...' show a thorough understanding about the construction of such a work. The notes also contain the words 'speaks in accents disconsolate' and 'wail', telling the knowledgeable reader that the composer was inspired by Longfellow's *Prelude to Evangeline: A Tale of Acadie*, which may be felt in the 'passionate protest' of the instruments uniting, the hopeful 3/4 section, and the sorrowful question and answer that finishes the *Andante*, corresponding to the end of the poem when Evangeline finds her beloved Gabriel, but he dies in her arms.

Similar patterns emerge in the South Place programme writing for Swepstone's compositions for wind and string ensemble. 1898 saw the premiere of her 25-minute Quintet for Piano, Flute, Clarinet, Horn and Bassoon in E $\flat$ , when Swepstone again performed her own work along with Frederic Griffith, Julian Egerton, T. Wotton and A. Borsdorf. The music is written about in the same distanced tone and is very objective, with no reference to the composer.<sup>601</sup> On the other hand, Ludwig Thuille's (1861 – 1907) sextet in the same concert is described as a 'fine work' in the first sentence and

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<sup>600</sup> SPES: Concert programme. 8<sup>th</sup> concert of the 24<sup>th</sup> season, 21 November 1909.

<sup>601</sup> SPES: Concert programme. 12<sup>th</sup> concert of the 13<sup>th</sup> season, 18 December 1898.

makes multiple references to the composer. In 1901, an ensemble of South Place regulars (Saunders, Clements, Borsdorf, Yonge and Hann) performed the premiere of Swepstone's Quintet for Horn, Violins, Viola and Cello in D and a similarly impersonal tone of writing is used to describe Swepstone's music. Brahms' Trio in E $\flat$ , Op. 40, is labelled as 'undoubtedly one of the finest works of modern chamber music' and the analysis contains adjectives such as 'beautiful' and 'interesting' throughout.<sup>602</sup> Swepstone's piece is, once again, described with analytical detail about themes, harmonies and structure, but no recognition of a composer or opinion on the music. The programme notes from 17 December 1905 are almost slightly insulting towards Swepstone's Trio for Piano, Oboe and Horn in C Minor, although this was surely unintentional.<sup>603</sup> Reinecke's Trio for the same instrumental combination as Swepstone's is described as an unusual example of such a work among the 'great' composers, whereas Swepstone's Trio is described as 'somewhat rare' and is not situated alongside other composers' works. An entire paragraph is dedicated to Reinecke's life, but no details are given of Swepstone or the conception of the work, despite it being a substantial 22 minutes and enough to warrant a recall from the audience. It was also not a premiere – the work had been performed elsewhere and there is no reference to its reception. The awkwardness, however, comes from the notes for Schumann's piano solo, placed directly after the incredibly detailed notes for Swepstone's piece, that say: 'The construction of this sonata is so simple that it does not call for detailed analysis; its beauties will be apparent to the appreciative listener', inadvertently suggesting that Swepstone's work is not so beautiful that it can be enjoyed simply on the merit of the music, and needs to be explained. On the other hand, at least it shows Swepstone's music was taken seriously. It was not a purposeful rebuke of Swepstone's work, which was very well supported by the concerts in general. The inconsistencies throughout suggest that perhaps Swepstone's programme notes were not written by the usual writer, and such analytical detail in each one suggests that they were probably written by the composer herself. Unfortunately, this separates her compositions from the descriptions of other works by composers, many of whom are given an implied 'genius' status through overwhelming praise.

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<sup>602</sup> SPES: Concert programme. 21<sup>st</sup> concert of the 15<sup>th</sup> season, 10 March 1901.

<sup>603</sup> SPES: Concert programme. 12<sup>th</sup> concert of the 20<sup>th</sup> season, 17 December 1905.

The rest of Swepstone's compositions do not have programme notes attached to them. Most of the South Place programmes only contained notes for the first and last works, which were usually the longest or written for a larger ensemble. Thus, it is normal that programme notes were not included for Swepstone's solo pieces or songs, yet they might have been expected for the Quartet in A Minor for piano, violin, viola and cello, a four-movement work that was performed twice in the twenty-seventh and thirty-fifth seasons. There was, however, a review of its performance in the twenty-seventh season as part of a special concert of modern British chamber music. On this occasion, Walthew, Saunders, Warner and Crabbe performed the work. The review in *The Musical Standard*, written by Douglas Donaldson, included a largely positive assessment of the piece by Coleridge-Taylor, and also rather amusingly notes that the performers were unable to play Walthew's 'charming' Mosaic for clarinet and piano, as somebody had lost the clarinet part at the last moment. The review of Swepstone's piece was mixed:

Its first movement has many points of interest, but the scherzo – marked *allegro audace* – cannot be called a happy inspiration: its audacity is of a sinister kind. The slow movement has some poetical moments and is thoughtful, if not sad, in mood. The finale, a brisk amalgam of dance and song rhythms, is pleasing and optimistic. The chief fault in the work is a kind of mental *staccato*: no continuity of thought is perceptible, although there is much good material and some charming treatment.<sup>604</sup>

This account of a sort of 'mental staccato' in Swepstone's writing does ring true in a couple of her other compositions. For example, her Requiem for Cello and Piano is quite static and seems to have a lack of direction. It should also be noted that Donaldson wrote about Swepstone in a 1912 review of Harry Wharton-Wells' *Handbook of Music and Musicians*, criticising Wells for omitting 'serious women writers like Ethel Smyth, Edith Swepstone and Maude Valérie White', accusing him of willing the public to ignore their work.<sup>605</sup>

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<sup>604</sup> D, D. "South Place Sunday Concerts." *Musical Standard* 38, no. 988 (7 December 1912): 359.

<sup>605</sup> Wharton-Wells, Harry. *A Handbook of Music and Musicians* (London: Nelson and Sons, 1912).

Aside from reviews, another way to conceive of what these string works were like, is to look at the few of her surviving instrumental works, including the early Minuet for Strings (discussed above) and the Tarantelle. There is no record of a performance of the *Tarantelle*, though it may have been performed and the reviews or programmes have disappeared. However, the slight change in handwriting and more sophisticated style of composition indicate that this was a later piece than the Minuet, and section markings A – G suggest that the score was written for performance. It appears that more thought has been put into the melodic lines of each instrumental part, making the harmonies work more linearly as well as horizontally. Unlike the Minuet, the double bass does not exclusively mimic the cello part. Mostly it is sparser and works more clearly to emphasise the bass line, subsequently relieving the cello from this function. (see Example 11). In general, the work is also much freer, both in terms of phrasing and structure, as well as harmonically.

Example 11 - First page of Sweptstone's Tarentelle, bars 1 – 20 <sup>606</sup>

*Tarentelle*

*Edith Sweptstone*

*allegro*

The musical score is written for a string quartet and piano. It consists of five staves: Violino I, Violino II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabasso. The time signature is 6/8, and the key signature has one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked 'allegro'. The score begins with a piano (p) dynamic. The first system contains bars 1-6, the second system contains bars 7-12, and the third system contains bars 13-18. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, beams, and dynamic markings like 'mf' and 'f'.

Although many of Sweptstone's works included in the concerts were not accompanied by programme notes, often there were literary quotations accompanying the title,

<sup>606</sup> Sweptstone, Edith. Tarentelle. Unpublished. Parkway Central Library (Philadelphia, US), Fleischer Collection: 649S



giving an indication of what inspired Swepstone's compositional output. Like Liza Lehmann, Edith Swepstone was also inspired to compose by Tennyson's *In Memoriam* (her orchestral work *Les Ténèbres* was also inspired by this poem). Sadly, her *Lyric Cycle* for string quartet is, like much of her work, lost or destroyed, but the quotations written in this programme from 1911 gives us some idea about the inspiration for the piece. It says: 'Short swallow-flights of song, that dip their wings in tears, and skim away'.<sup>607</sup> The quotation comes at a point in Tennyson's poem where he is resolving to stay strong in moments doubt or sadness, and the swallow referenced in this quotation is known to represent death and resurrection. The piece may well have explored these moments of confusion and sorrow through the music, but may ultimately have ended in hope, such as the bird who skims away.

Swepstone also wrote solo instrumental pieces that were performed at South Place, for example, her *Six Miniatures for Viola*, which was performed by Ernest Yonge and accompanied by Swepstone in 1905. The piece is subtitled 'Pansies – for Thoughts'. This quotation comes from Ophelia's infamous mad scene in *Hamlet*, where she hands out flowers to others in the scene with symbolic references to the character's circumstance. The six miniatures could each be based on the meaning ascribed to the six flowers that Ophelia hands out: rosemary, fennel, pansies, columbines, rue and daisies. Or perhaps the music is more inspired by her relationship with her brother Laertes, to whom she gives the pansies as a token of her love before she drowns herself. Or maybe it was simply the beauty and delicacy of Ophelia's character that inspired the music. Even if none of the above, the reference to Shakespeare's Ophelia, a popular subject for Victorian artists, indicates that Swepstone was engaged with current trends in art, as well as literature, poetry and music. Furthermore, evidence of her contemporary taste in music can be found in a statement she wrote for *The Musical Herald* about her 'strongest musical impression' from 1904. Swepstone wrote: 'Claude Debussy's "L'après-midi d'un Faune"'. The suggestion of something half-humanly articulate amid sylvan surroundings revealed great imagination and originality'.<sup>608</sup> Other leading musicians of the day were asked to contribute, and most referenced British music (notably Elgar) or Austro-German music, with a few

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<sup>607</sup> SPES: Concert programme. 24<sup>th</sup> concert of the 26<sup>th</sup> season, 26 March 1911.

<sup>608</sup> "The Strongest Impression." *The Musical Herald*, no. 682 (1905): 8-9.

exceptions, including Walthew's mourning of the death of Dvorák. Given the criticisms that Swepstone received, it is interesting that she is particularly struck by 'originality and imagination', suggesting that it was an aspect she strove for in her own work.

The first of Swepstone's solo pieces to have been performed at South Place had no notes by the composer at all, but luckily it is one of a limited number of her compositions to have survived. Stainer & Bell published Swepstone's *Lament* for violin and piano in 1912. However, Saunders and Swepstone performed the piece much earlier at South Place, in 1900.<sup>609</sup> *Lament* begins with a striking opening four bars from the unaccompanied violin, which already hints at the chromaticism and tonal ambiguity that is prevalent throughout the work (see Example 12). The first bar indicates the piece may be in G minor but the introduction of C sharps suggests a Hungarian minor or Lydian scale. However, there is a constant fluctuation between C ♯ and C natural, and several short passages that use B natural hint towards the *Lament* ending in G major. There are also constant changes in dynamics and tempo, adding to the fluidity of the music, emphasised by the regular use of dotted rhythms and triplets. Contrast is created through the distance in pitch between the violin and the piano; the violin has long lyrical passages but between phrases often makes leaps of over two octaves. Meanwhile, the low tremolos that are introduced on the piano (Example 12) create a dark, thunderous character that returns later in the piece, at times also mimicking the violin melody in the right hand. Such atmospheric music would certainly have stood out at the concert, although it was sandwiched between a diverse selection of chamber music: two recitatives and arias by Handel were programmed alongside a Spohr Quartet (Op. 29) about which Clements wrote 'not very interesting for listeners', and a cello solo by Georg Goltermann (1824 – 1898). This was followed by Troup performing Moritz Mozkowski's (1854 – 1925) Op. 34 piano solo, some songs by Frederic H. Cowen (1852 - 1935), and the concert ended with Hermann Goetz's (1840 – 1876) Trio in G Minor, about which Clements commented 'Uncommonly good Op.1!'. It is disappointing that nothing was written about Swepstone's *Lament*, as the unusual melodic harmonies surely would have triggered some reaction, positive or not.

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<sup>609</sup> SPES: Concert programme. 17<sup>th</sup> concert of the 14<sup>th</sup> season, 4 February 1899.

Example 12 - Swepstone's Lament, bars 1 – 10

**Poco Lento.**

Violin

*p molto espressivo* *poco cresc*

Piano

*pp*

Vln.

*mf*

Pno.

*poco cresc* *mp*

Later in the year during the following concert season, Swepstone also performed her own piano solo, *The Spectral Hunt*, another piece that was published and has an existing score.<sup>610</sup> This short character piece for piano is based on one central theme (Example 13), but Swepstone creates contrast by employing fast rhythms and rapid shifts in harmony, whilst making use of the wide range of the piano. The slightly tentative opening theme is put through a series of transformations, at one point sounding delicate (Example 14) and later becoming almost brash as the dynamics build and the accompaniment becomes more abrupt (Example 15). Yet, the quiet and abrupt end to the piece sounds almost comic (Example 16). Perhaps this is to indicate that the drama of the music is not to be taken too seriously. Could it also have been a way for Swepstone to make light of the overtly ‘masculine’ nature of her music? Swepstone performed the piece herself in November 1900, alongside the extremely contrasting, melancholic *Barcarolle (The Seasons)* by Tchaikovsky. In the same concert, Swepstone performed Josef Rheinberger’s (1839 – 1901) Quartet in E♭ with Ernest Yonge, B. P. Parker and John Saunders. Later in the season, Swepstone appeared as accompanist at another of the chamber music concerts featuring the London String Quartet, and in

<sup>610</sup> SPES: Concert Programme. 5<sup>th</sup> concert of the 15<sup>th</sup> season, 4 November 1900; Swepstone, Edith. *The Spectral Hunt*. London: Augener & Co., 1892.

March she was the accompanist at one of the South Place Orchestral Concerts.<sup>611</sup> Saunders also performed at this concert as the solo violinist during Saint-Saëns' Concerto in A. At the very least, Swebstone and Saunders must have had a good professional relationship, if not friendship.

Example 13 - Swebstone's *Spectral Hunt*, bars 5 – 12



Example 14 - Swebstone's *Spectral Hunt*, bars 104 – 111

<sup>611</sup> SPES: Concert Programme. 20<sup>th</sup> concert of the 15<sup>th</sup> season, 3 March 1901; 24<sup>th</sup> concert of the 15<sup>th</sup> season, 31 March 1900 (information available in previous programme).

Example 15 - Swepstone's *Spectral Hunt*, bars 177 – 184



Example 16 - Swepstone's *Spectral Hunt*, bars 225 – 231

This particularly busy couple of years fall within the period where Swepstone was acting on the committee (1898 – 1903) and seven of her instrumental works were performed. During this period, Swepstone also contributed some songs and a piano solo at the Soirée of Ethical Societies that was held at South Place in November 1901. As well as giving her time and musical skills, Swepstone also contributed financially. In 1899 she is listed as giving money to the Debenture Debt Extinction Fund (as was Troup). Swepstone also gave lectures at South Place, including one on Mendelssohn and Schumann in March 1898, which was advertised alongside other Sunday afternoon free lectures but highlighted as a special lecture. She was asked to give the lecture at South Place again by the soirée committee as part of their activities, and in 1900 she

gave it again at Rectory Road Literary Society at Clapton in the Parish Room, an event that attracted a large audience.<sup>612</sup> Also in March 1901, she gave a musical paper entitled 'Some thoughts on nature and music', both times including musical illustrations on the piano by herself.

Whilst Swebstone was busy with her role on the committee at South Place, she was still living with her mother and three of her siblings (all now in their 20s and 30s), as well as the servants. New publications and performances of her songs, were constantly being advertised in music journals and both national and local newspapers. Swebstone also continued to be active in the musical community in London apart from South Place. In 1898, Swebstone was a judge along with Messers W. H. Bonner and T. H. Warner at The North-East Middlesex Band of Hope Union competition in solo music and choral singing, held in Dalston.<sup>613</sup> Twelve years later, the event had expanded to become The Hackney and East Middlesex Band of Hope Union Summer Festival and was held at Alexandra Palace. Swebstone was a judge this year as well, alongside W. G. W. Goodworth, who acted as the adjudicators for the solo vocal and instrumental contests and the choral contests respectively.<sup>614</sup> Despite most of her works being multi-instrumental chamber works and orchestral pieces, Swebstone was still clearly respected for her solo pieces and songs within that community. Within these years, Swebstone was also in the press for having been specially commended by the judges of the Worshipful Company of Musicians for *The Gentlewoman* prize of £25, for an original orchestral composition. The winner was Marian Arkwright (1863 – 1922) for her work *The Winds of the World*, and other women who received special commendation were Emma Lomax, Susie Spain-Dunk, and Adelaide Thomas. There were 28 competitors in total, including someone from Montreal, Canada and intriguingly, a blind girl, who is unfortunately not named.<sup>615</sup>

Outside of South Place archive, there are more records of concerts featuring Swebstone's songs and orchestral pieces than her other chamber music, although it is

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<sup>612</sup> SPES/1/10/6: Minute books of the Soirée Committee of South Place Ethical Society, 1895 – 1905; Bartley, *Far from the Fashionable Crowd*, 51 (information from *Musical Herald* (2 March 1896), 78).

<sup>613</sup> "News from all Parts." *The Musical Herald* no. 604 (1 July 1898): 205.

<sup>614</sup> "Competitions." *The Musical Herald* no. 748 (1 Jul 1910): 214-215.

<sup>615</sup> *Musical Times* April 1 1906, p.271, vol. 47, no 758.

likely that there were other undocumented performances. One exception was a short report of Joseph Holbrooke's second concert in his 1908 season of British music at the Salle Erard (Paris). Several new works were performed, including: 'a Fantasia for strings by F Kessler, a 'Cycle quartet' of unpretentious kind by Edith Swepstone, and an effective set of Variations on an original theme by T. F. Dunhill...'.<sup>616</sup>

During the 1930s Swepstone's music found another regular platform at John Parr's chamber music concerts in Sheffield.<sup>617</sup> In 1945, George Linstead wrote a substantial account of the concerts in *The Musical Times*.<sup>618</sup> Parr was a bassoonist, and was inspired to set up the concerts by his love of chamber music for wind and the comparative scarcity of it. He requested composers of any ability to write music for woodwind quartets or quintets, and programmed them alongside rarely performed works of the same genre by the most celebrated classical composers. One example of the company that Swepstone's music had at these concerts is from 1938, when Swepstone's *Elegy* for wind and piano was performed in the same concert as wind music by C. P. E. Bach and J. C. Bach, Samuel Wesley (1766 – 1837), and a 'jig for wind quartet' by Ian White (1901 – 60).<sup>619</sup> The concerts hosted many premieres of works, but Parr was selective about his programming. He chose to only include four of Reica's 24 wind quartets because he thought the others were too dull.<sup>620</sup> Thus, it is a good sign for Swepstone that her music was performed on at least 11 occasions. Among these performances were:

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<sup>616</sup> "Concerts of British Music." *The Musical Times* 49, no. 783 (1908): 323.

<sup>617</sup> A selection of programmes can be found at: BL: 004591339: Programmes of Mr John Parr's Chamber Concerts, 1930 – 57; R780.69 S41: Sheffield Monthly Chamber Concerts (promoted by John Parr), 1930 – 57.

<sup>618</sup> Linstead, George F. "John Parr and His Concerts." *The Musical Times* 86, no. 1228 (1945): 169-72.

<sup>619</sup> "Yorkshire Music Diary." *The Yorkshire Post*, 26 February 1938: 7.

<sup>620</sup> Linstead, "John Parr and His Concerts", 169-72.

Table 7 - Swepstone's music performed in Sheffield.<sup>621</sup>

Date of performance	Work
05/04/1930	Scherzo for Flute, Oboe, Clarinet and Bassoon
01/03/1930	Quartet for Flute, Oboe, Clarinet and Bassoon
27/09/1930	Quintet for Pianoforte, Flute, Oboe, Clarinet and Bassoon
08/11/1930	Quintet for Pianoforte, Flute, Clarinet, French horn and Bassoon
06/12/1930	Quintet for Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, French horn and Bassoon
07/12/1935	Quintet for Horn and Strings
11/01/1936	Trio for Oboe, Horn and Pianoforte (first performance in Sheffield)
05/12/1936	Requiem for Cello and Piano (first performance in Sheffield)
02/01/1937	Lament for Horn and Piano (first performance)
11/12/1937	Quintet No 2: Pianoforte, Oboe, Clarinet, Horn and Bassoon (first performance)
26/02/1938	Elegy for Pianoforte, Oboe, Clarinet, Horn and Bassoon

The two first performances suggest that Swepstone was part of John Parr's circle of modern composers who he would ask to write new works for his concerts, probably because he knew she already had experience and interest in writing for wind ensembles and clearly liked her work. The fact that Swepstone's Scherzo appeared very early on in his concert series shows that her music was by no means a last resort for him, even though his genre of choice was limited. On this basis, Swepstone was still composing in her late sixties and early seventies. On the other hand, the Requiem, listed as the first performance in Sheffield, shows that Swepstone's chamber music was being performed at places other than South Place and Sheffield, but there is a lack of sources to prove exactly where. Only two of those works had in fact been performed previously at South Place: the wind Quintet on 8 November 1930 and the Trio on 11 January 1936.<sup>622</sup> Unlike at South Place, Swepstone did not perform the music herself; instead the works were mostly performed by John Parr (bassoon) and his peers, who were mostly amateur and semi-professional musicians, only occasionally did big names like Holbrooke appear on the programmes as a performer. Yet, due to the diverse breadth of music (between 1930 and 1945 approximately 1000

<sup>621</sup> BL: 004591339 (British Library) and R780.69 S41 (Henry Watson Music Library).

<sup>622</sup> SPES: Concert programmes. 12<sup>th</sup> concert of the 13<sup>th</sup> season, 18 December 1898; 12<sup>th</sup> concert of the 20<sup>th</sup> season, 17 December 1905 (listed as 'first time at the concerts' rather than a premiere, so had probably been performed elsewhere).



different works were performed) the concerts attracted musicians who wanted to hear unusual repertoire, as well as local residents. Therefore, Swepstone's music would have been heard by a wide audience at these concerts, but sadly Linstead does not mention Swepstone in his article as one of the modern composers whose work Parr was championing. Tellingly, when talking about modern works of 'some significance' that have been included in the concerts, Linstead references Paul Hindemith (1895 – 1963), Vittorio Rieti (1898 – 1994), Francis Poulenc (1899 – 1963), Otto Nováček (1866 – 1900), Albéric Magnard (1865 – 1914), Albert Roussel (1869 – 1937) and Erik Satie (1866 – 1925) – a range of European nationalities.<sup>623</sup> However, when talking of works that 'show competence without adding much to one's musical experience', he lists Hurlstone, Walthew, Dunhill, Grainger and Holbrooke – strikingly all British.<sup>624</sup> In this instance, when the writer clearly has a bias towards non-British composers, it should not be a surprise that Swepstone's name was not mentioned in either list. In the whole article, only two women's names were mentioned in another list of composers whose works were performed: Marian Arkwright and Janet Salsbury are named alongside Edmundstoune Duncan, William G. Whittaker, Hely-Hutchinson, Nicholas Gatty, Donald Tovey and Alexander Brent-Smith.

This is the second connection to have been made between Arkwright and Swepstone, the first being the Gentlewoman's prize to which Arkwright beat Swepstone in 1906. There are other similarities between the pair, other than their closeness in age. Both wrote chamber music for a range of instruments including wind, as well as vocal music and orchestral works. Additionally, even though Arkwright's music was programmed frequently in Sheffield, where she appears to have been appreciated, her music has also mostly been lost over time.<sup>625</sup> Despite both women having a large range of compositional outputs that were performed nationally, subsequent to their deaths no one appears to have considered them important enough to save their manuscripts, or recordings of their works. In comparison to their female contemporaries who wrote mainly songs, or their male contemporaries who wrote instrumental music, both Swepstone's and Arkwright's reputations have undergone a dramatic drop since the

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<sup>623</sup> Linstead, "John Parr and His Concerts", 169-72.

<sup>624</sup> Ibid., 172.

<sup>625</sup> Fuller, Sophie. "Arkwright, Marian" in *Oxford Music Online*. Last modified 20 January 2001. Accessed July 2018.

1930s. It seems that, in a genre that had been dominated by male composers for centuries, the women struggled even more to make their music heard and remembered.

## 8.6 Orchestral music

Another link between Swebstone and Arkwright, is that they were the only two women to have works performed by the Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra during the first 500 concerts between 1895 and 1903; five by Swebstone and one by Arkwright. The first of Swebstone's works to be performed was a premiere of *Daramona* in October 1899. However, this was not the first orchestra to perform Swebstone's work since she left GSM. In 1897, the Stock Exchange Orchestral and Choral Society (an amateur orchestra) performed *Les Ténèbres* at Queen's Hall. The work was inspired by the line 'death hath made his darkness ... with thee' from Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, which was inspiring so many composers at the time.<sup>626</sup> A review in *Lloyd's Weekly London Newspaper* described the elegiac work as 'an absolute novelty' that was ably constructed and showed the influence of Wagner, although he believed 'a little more relief to the sombreness of the theme would have increased the chances of frequent performance', an interesting comment to make given the topic of the work, unless the reviewer did not know about the link to Tennyson.<sup>627</sup> It was also reviewed in *The Musical Times* as being 'clever, vigorously scored, and has no touch of femininity', which as Fuller notes, was intended as a compliment to mean that it is a bold and complex work.<sup>628</sup>

The same year, the Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra (BMO) performed one of Arkwright's orchestral pieces for the first time.<sup>629</sup> This was only two years into the history of the concert series, which began in 1895 under the leadership of Sir Dan Godfrey. Like South Place, one of the aims of the BMO was to promote new British works. In the first 500 concerts, out of 891 works in total, 114 were by British

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<sup>626</sup> *Bournemouth Guardian*, 14 March 1903.

<sup>627</sup> *Lloyd's Weekly London Newspaper*, (14 Feb 1897): 6.

<sup>628</sup> "Amateur Orchestral Societies." *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* 38, no. 649 (1897): 171.

<sup>629</sup> *Variations for Orchestra*, 29 April 1897. See BL: Music Collections: d.488.g.(1). Souvenir of the 500<sup>th</sup> Symphony Concert given at the Winter Gardens, 14 December 1903.

composers, 71 of which were first performances. On one occasion in later years, Godfrey led an entire concert of works by women composers in which one of Swepstone's works was performed (1927).<sup>630</sup> She was clearly considered by Godfrey to be a noteworthy British composer. Other Swepstone works performed by the orchestra include:

Table 8 - Swepstone's music performed by the BMO.

Date of performance	Work
26/11/1900	Suite, <i>Ice Maiden</i> (first performance)
03/02/1902	Symphony in G Major
09/03/1903	Overture,
09/03/1903	<i>A Vision</i>
25/02/1904 and 23/04/1927	<i>Prelude to Paulo and Francesca</i>
16/04/1906	<i>Mors Janua Vitae</i>
16/04/1906	<i>A Vision</i> , Tone Poem
05/05/1909	<i>The Wind in the Pines</i> , Tone Poem
09/05/1910	<i>Horn of Roland Overture</i>
09/05/1912	<i>Moonrise on the Mountain Tone Poem</i>
09/03/1913	<i>Les Ténèbres</i>
09/03/1913	<i>A Vision</i> , Tone Poem
10/06/1914	<i>Woods in April</i> Tone poem
03/09/1924	Suite, <i>Four Ships</i> (first performance)

Unfortunately, none of these works can currently be found. The parts were kept by supporter of the concerts John B. M. Camm, and it is possible that the music was destroyed after being stored under the stage at the Winter Gardens. Thankfully, the performances elicited many reviews in the *Bournemouth Guardian*. In the review of the 1899 performance of *Daramona*, the critic describes Swepstone as principally 'a writer of chamber music', a reputation that had clearly developed from her early career associations with South Place. It reveals that the work was based on lines from William Black's *Shandon Bells*, a popular novel from 1893 that has subsequently lost its popularity.

The wild March winds are blowing,  
The trees are dark; the skies are grey;  
O love, let us be going –  
The evening gather; far the way.

<sup>630</sup> Fuller, Sophie. "'Putting the BBC and T. Beecham to Shame': The Macnaghten–Lemare Concerts, 1931 – 7." *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 138, no.2 (2013): 381.

O do you hear the thunder  
On Daramona's rocky  
The wild seas sweeping under  
The ghostly cliffs of back Glengyle.

The critic was impressed by Swepstone's use of running passages in the basses and cellos to represent the thunder, as well as the orchestral colouring. Yet, despite an enthusiastic view from the critic, he stated that the work was 'fairly well received, though not with much cordiality' by the audience.<sup>631</sup> Following this, Cuthbert Hawley wrote a more mixed account of Swepstone's *Ice Maiden* suite. His summary of the work is that 'it is fanciful, cleverly scored, and in parts shows decided individual talent', his main criticism being the similarity to other works, a fairly regular criticism of her early output. This time, Hawley hears the witch motive from Engelbert Humperdinck's (1854 – 1921) *Hansel and Gretel* in the first movement and 'Ases Tod' from Grieg's *Peer Gynt* in the last. More cutting is Hawley's opening comment: 'As we unfortunately do not happen to know anything of this composer or her other works, if any...', as if this might be her first attempt at writing music. This is sort of balanced out at the end with a generally optimistic view: 'we are convinced of the lady's talent, and we are sure that... we shall have interesting and excellent work from her pen'.<sup>632</sup>

Swepstone's Symphony in G Minor was placed significantly within the context of the subsequent review, but for some reason instead of giving a personal reception of the music, the reviewer chose instead to copy the programme notes, simply adding that the audience listened with rapt attention. A few sentences were given to Sullivan's *In Memoriam* overture, commenting on the solemnity of the work and the spirited applause, followed by an acknowledgement of the difficulty of the solo part in Saint Saens' Concerto for Cello and Orchestra. Tschaikovsky's Suite No. 5 in G (Op. 55) was only described as having elicited 'loud and prolonged applause'.<sup>633</sup> Considering Tschaikovsky's popularity around 1900, perhaps this was considered sufficient.<sup>634</sup> However, the sense is that the reviewer wanted to say more about Swepstone's music

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<sup>631</sup> *Bournemouth Guardian* (28 October 1899), 3 – 4.

<sup>632</sup> *Bournemouth Guardian* (1 December 1900), 4.

<sup>633</sup> *Bournemouth Guardian* (8 February 1902), 4.

<sup>634</sup> Thomas, Gareth James, "The Impact of Russian Music in England 1893 – 1929." (PhD diss., University of Birmingham: 2005), 11.

but perhaps was unsure what to say about this lesser-known British composer. One can only presume that since there were no positive or negative additions that the reviewer was mostly in agreement with what was already written. The re-printed programme notes are written in a very different style to the Swepstone notes in the South Place programmes. Descriptions of the work, such as the second subject having a charming melody, and the Rondo finale being a 'happily conceived and well written movement' show that Swepstone was not responsible for this analysis of her work.<sup>635</sup>

The rest of the notes reveal that the Symphony was fairly conventional, except for the removal of a repeat (presumably the exposition of the first movement), about which the writer adds ' – what a good thing it would be were this always done – '.<sup>636</sup> Other observations include a compliment about Swepstone's use of counterpoint, and a theme in the Largo that was reminiscent of Mendelssohn, although this is not written as a criticism. Both of these points are typical of writing about Swepstone, emphasising that counterpoint was an element of composition for her since her studies at GSM, and possibly something that she put above melody and thematic development in her orchestral writing. References to Mendelssohn in connection to her music, alongside the lectures she gave about him, also indicate that he was one of her biggest influences.

Next came a concert that included Swepstone's tone poem *A Vision* and *Les Ténèbres*, which was possibly receiving only its second performance since the 1897 premiere at Queen's Hall. This time round, the reviewer makes no comment on the perceived 'lack of femininity' of the work, or any excessive sombreness.<sup>637</sup> Instead, the review praises the 'excellent part-writing for the strings, which suggests that the composer is possessed of imagination and poetic instinct'.<sup>638</sup> It seems as though Swepstone's reputation, built through the BMO and South Place, had by now grown enough for the reviewer to provide a more confident account of Swepstone's work than Hawley was able to give just three years previously, or than the reviewer could make of the

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<sup>635</sup> *Bournemouth Guardian* (8 February 1902), 4.

<sup>636</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>637</sup> *Lloyd's Weekly London Newspaper*, (14 Feb 1897): 6; "Amateur Orchestral Societies." *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* 38, no. 649 (1897): 171.

<sup>638</sup> *Bournemouth Guardian* (14 March 1903), 5. *A Vision* and *Les Tenebres* performed 9 March 1903.

previous symphony. After the performance of *A Vision*, scored for horn, harp, bell and strings, Swepstone (who had been sitting in the balcony) had to come down to the platform and bow in acknowledgement of the applause. No comment is made at this point about Swepstone's gender, and the reception suggests that by now the Bournemouth audience were more aware of Swepstone and her work.

However, from then on the *Bournemouth Guardian* reported much less about Swepstone's works. They were usually mentioned within the reviews but with less of a focus, suggesting that they became of less interest to the critics or the audience.<sup>639</sup> The only one to receive more detailed commentary was *March of Honour*, performed in 1916 and written 'In memory of those who have fallen in the war'. The critic seems to want to be kind about Swepstone's ambitious work, but the result is that the review comes across as a defence of the work rather than a celebration, and tellingly gives no indication of the audience reception.

Edith Swepstone's march... was a commendable attempt to do justice to a subject that demands a master genius, and even that master genius could not do it now. For the ... celebration of such a sacrifice talents of the highest order are necessary, and in Wordsworth's expression the emotion must be remembered in tranquillity. As with Andean peak, such a circumstance needs perspective, for the proper appreciation of its massive proportions.<sup>640</sup>

The description of the work as a 'commendable attempt' indicates that the reviewer did not consider the work a success, and explicitly states that Swepstone was not a 'master genius' with 'talents of the highest order'. Furthermore, the use of the word 'master' in this case likely was meant to mean an expert, but has an implicit gendered subtext that suggests a male composer would have been more appropriate for this work.

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<sup>639</sup> The Guardian (8 May 1912), 1; *Bournemouth Guardian* (11 May 1912), 4 -5; *Bournemouth Daily Echo*, 2 September 1924.

<sup>640</sup> *Bournemouth Guardian* (3 June 1916), 8.

In 1927, the Bournemouth Orchestra gave a women composers' concert, which featured Sweptstone's *Prelude to Paulo and Francesca*, first performed in London in 1901.<sup>641</sup> The performance was not commented on in the press. When the work was performed in the Buxton Gardens in 1910 as part of a promenade concert series set up by Lyell-Taylor, *Paolo and Francesca* was described as an 'imaginative and pleasing composition'.<sup>642</sup> However, there are a few remaining programme notes from the BSO, one of which covers this work that received at least two performances by the orchestra. The work was written as an overture to Stephen Phillip's poetic drama, the premiere of which Sweptstone presumably attended at St. James's Theatre in 1902. It was based on two central themes and gave prominence to the cor anglais, mirroring her affinity for writing for wind instruments in her chamber music. As before, there is a noticeable difference between these and the South Place notes, as Walter Barnett includes some subjective views within his summary: 'The prelude contains a good deal of clever writing, and a fine point is made near the finish, when the second theme is thundered forth by the full orchestra, suggesting the terrible climax of the story. After this, the quiet ending is doubly impressive'.<sup>643</sup>

On the other hand, the programme from the concert on 16 April 1906 featuring the Funeral March *Mors Janua Vitae* (Death, the door to Life) and the Tone Poem *A Vision* only includes a short narrative piece, with no clear reference as to where it was taken from, only 'From the French'.<sup>644</sup> However, the short passage clearly relates to both titles of the work, which describes an eerie scene set in a cemetery, where a wanderer by Lake Geneva sees a vision of ghost children dancing to 'mysterious' music. It is a shame not to know the origin of this haunting text, which clearly inspired the music. The Overture *The Horn of Roland*, is also represented in the programme notes through a story, this time a summary of an extract from the epic poem, *The Song of Roland*,

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<sup>641</sup> *Bournemouth Daily Echo* (23 April 1927), 5 – 6.

<sup>642</sup> *The Derby Daily Telegraph* (17 September 1910), 2; Quotation from "St. James's Hall." *The Musical Times* 49, no. 784 (1908): 394. On other occasions when her music was performed there it was described as showing 'remarkable promise' from a composer who 'is fast coming into notice.'

<sup>643</sup> BML: Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra: Concert programme, 25 February 1904 (Prelude *Paolo and Francesca*).

<sup>644</sup> Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra: Concert programme, 16 April 1906 (featuring Sweptstone's Funeral March *Mors Janua Vitae* and Tone Poem *A Vision*).

thought to be the oldest surviving major work of French literature.<sup>645</sup> It seems that French literature had quite an influence on Swepstone and her music, which makes an interesting comparison to the more consistent comparisons to German music.

In 1907, Arkwright conducted the BMO's performance of her prize-winning work. Despite the number of Swepstone's works performed by the orchestra, the composer did not conduct any herself. It is likely that she had the opportunity, but declined, as Godfrey requested many British composers to conduct their own works after a particularly successful occasion with Edward German in 1897.<sup>646</sup> However, in 1914, perhaps after gaining some confidence through her rising prominence at South Place and Bournemouth, Swepstone directed the performance of two of her tone poems at the Brighton Music Festival. Both works were based on Thomas Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, a reworking of English and French stories about King Arthur, Merlin, Lancelot and Guinevere. *The Athenaeum* described both pieces as 'programme music of the right kind', but criticised the second for the lack of strength in the treatment of the thematic material.<sup>647</sup> Whilst this comment may have been a fair analysis, the repeated use of the word 'strength' by different reviewers has extra connotations about the masculinity/femininity and the success/failure of the work.

As most of the South Place Orchestral Concert programmes are still missing from the archive, there is limited information available about performances of Swepstone's orchestral works by the South Place orchestra. Most information about the full repertoire of the orchestra can be found in adverts for the concerts. Within the much smaller scope of their repertoire, they appear to mirror the chamber concerts through their variety of compositions, mixing old with new by composers from across Europe. However, unlike in the chamber concerts, Swepstone appears to be the only woman in the programmes.<sup>648</sup> At least two of Swepstone's works were performed: Adagio in

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<sup>645</sup> Encyclopaedia Britannica. "La Chanson de Roland." Accessed October 2018.  
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/La-Chanson-de-Roland>

<sup>646</sup> BL: Music Collections: d.488.g.(1). Souvenir of the 500<sup>th</sup> Symphony Concert given at the Winter Gardens, 14 December 1903.

<sup>647</sup> *The Athenaeum*, 21 November 1914.

<sup>648</sup> If more of the South Place Orchestral Concert programmes are ever discovered this may uncover other women composers in their repertoire.



1904/5 and *Woods in April* – *Idyll* in 1921.<sup>649</sup> Only the latter can be found in an existing concert programme, accompanied by programme notes signed E.M.S – confirming the fact that Swepstone wrote her own programme notes for South Place (the rest of the programme notes were written by Walthew, who also conducted the orchestra). The 10-minute piece was lightly scored for woodwind, horn, triangle and strings, rather than a full orchestra. She describes the work as a ‘little image’ of the nests and singing birds that appear in early spring, inspired by R. L. Stevenson’s lines: ‘up springing/Make all the April woods/Merry with singing’.<sup>650</sup> Swepstone used the woodwind to create ‘bird-like phrases’ supported by the strings, and like the chamber music notes, talks the listener through the piece in terms of structure, themes and tonality. Reading these in comparison to the complimentary descriptions in the BSO’s programmes, it becomes clear that a broad audience is likely to have been more excited by the BSO’s promise of a ‘clever’ and ‘impressive’ piece of music (posited alongside analytical notes), rather than Swepstone’s own drier descriptions, such as in the case of the *Idyll*: ‘The principal theme in G, which follows, is divided between the first Violins and ‘Cellos, and leads without a break into a second theme in A, which in its turn gives way to a third theme in B♭ on the Horn’.<sup>651</sup> By writing the notes herself, Swepstone is forced to be more modest about her work, and this need to be modest would naturally have been enhanced by her identity as a Victorian woman composer. The South Place Concert Committee usually sold between 500 and 1000 concert programmes every week, and as the concert was free to attend, it is likely that these were purchased with the intention of reading thoroughly. It is also conceivable that these would have had a significant influence on the audience’s anticipation and reception of the music. Thus, while in many ways Swepstone helped to raise her profile as a composer by being proactive and taking control of her career, it is possible that this attitude hindered rather than helped with public opinion of her work, as she was unable to give praise and context to her work. Nevertheless, if she had not carved a space for herself within the South Place musical community, her music would probably not have been included

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<sup>649</sup> SPES: Concert programme. 26<sup>th</sup> concert of the 19<sup>th</sup> season (9<sup>th</sup> orchestral concert), 16 April 1905; 10<sup>th</sup> concert of the 36<sup>th</sup> season (27<sup>th</sup> orchestral concert), 4 December 1921.

<sup>650</sup> Swepstone also wrote two books of children’s music based on his work: Swepstone, Edith. *R. L. Stevenson’s Songs for Children*. London: J. Curwen & Sons, 1897. British Library: Music collections: G.385.n.(5.); Swepstone, Edith. *R. L. Stevenson’s Songs for Children: Second Series*. London: J. Curwen & Sons, 1910. British Library: Music collections: G.425.b.(14.)

<sup>651</sup> SPES: Concert Programme: 10<sup>th</sup> concert of the 36<sup>th</sup> season, 4 December 1921.

in their concerts amid other orchestral music by Mozart, Walthew, Bach, Haydn, Parry and Delibes. Walthew and Swepstone clearly stand out as lesser-known British composers, but both had many other roles at South Place, and thus were directly influential in the performances of their works.

## **8.7 Conclusions**

At different stages of her life, Swepstone was given significant recognition by four main platforms: Guildhall School of Music (1885 – 90), South Place Ethical Society (1897 – 1921), Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra (1900 – 27) and John Parr's Chamber Music Concerts in Sheffield (1930 – 8). Her reputation was largely formed by the opportunities that these institutions gave her and South Place was crucial in presenting her work on a regular basis for the first time since she left education. This aided Swepstone to form an identity as a composer of instrumental music when she was primarily only given the opportunity to publish songs. When Edwin Evans described her as an 'already distinguished' composer in 1903, this was mostly following a selection of published songs, a few performances of her work at Bournemouth and several more at the South Place Sunday Concerts.<sup>652</sup> As the twentieth century continued, her reputation continued to grow on a national level. Throughout her life, she had considerable visibility as a British composer, so it is largely a subsequent lack of performances of her works that has caused Swepstone to disappear from current awareness. Although there are many exceptions, her work was often taken seriously by contemporary audiences and critics, and perhaps if this had continued after her death then many of the lost scores would be closer to being discovered. It was not, after all, a general lack of enthusiasm about Swepstone's work that prevented a longer lasting reputation. Her compositions split opinion, and it is important to remember that some of these opinions would have been coloured by late nineteenth and early twentieth-century attitudes to women writing large-scale chamber music and orchestral works. Among her main criticisms were several notes that parts of her music resembled the work of other composers, including Brahms, Grieg, Humperdinck and Wagner. These actually demonstrates quite a wide range of influences, in addition to her own acknowledgments of the work of Beethoven,

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<sup>652</sup> Evans, "Modern British Composers", 130-131.

Mendelssohn and Debussy. Evans' other criticism, that Swepstone allowed herself to be 'held back' by her training, can also be contested by the fact that many other reviewers praised her imagination and originality. Furthermore, from the works that still exist it is clear that Swepstone played with varying levels of experimentation depending on the nature and purpose of the music. There is a stark difference in style between her songs and the early string orchestra compositions and her later instrumental works such as *Spectral Hunt*, *Lament* and the Requiem. Evans' observation that her gender may have played a role in her hesitation to push boundaries may have been accurate in her early career, and perhaps it had an influence in how long it took her to gain confidence in her own compositional style. However, this did not hold Swepstone back from producing a large and varied output of compositions and forming professional relationships that meant her work was performed in many venues across five decades, earning her national success. Rediscovering her work reveals music that reacted to the context of its time in ways that both challenged and conformed to the contemporary stereotypes of women composers, and is a valuable addition to the repertoire of British music from the early twentieth century.

## **9.1 Introduction**

Few women had such a multifaceted role at South Place as Josephine Troup, or made such a large contribution to its musical growth between 1887 and 1927. After her death in 1913, South Place held a special memorial service in her honour, following the funeral at Golder's Green. In his speech, William Rawlings said that Troup had been a member of the Society for as long as he could remember, and she had 'rendered kindness after kindness and service after service' to South Place.<sup>653</sup> She was also described as 'the "Eliza Flower" of our generation' in the South Place publication then called *The Monthly List*.<sup>654</sup> It was also said that Troup's generosity extended towards many other societies in London. She had a heavy involvement in the ethical movement, more so than any other performers or composers associated with South Place at this time.<sup>655</sup> Rawlings also said of her: 'She was always overflowing with cheerfulness and vivacity, bearing with her an atmosphere of brightness and light-heartedness; and at the same time one of sincerity, earnestness, and depth of character.'<sup>656</sup> Unfortunately, Troup wrote under a variety of pseudonyms, apparently 'for very shame's sake', presumably because she wanted to be a modest woman. I have been unable to identify these pseudonyms, thus making it impossible to say exactly to what extent she contributed through music and writing. Nevertheless, she still left behind a substantial collection of poetry and music that triggered a lot of debate in respect to music and the ethical movement. An engagement with feminist issues, concerning respect to music, is apparent by the fact that she founded a scholarship at the Royal Academy of Music specifically aimed at women composers, also showing an awareness of the challenges that women who were less fortunate than her faced when aiming for a musical career. This chapter will consider the distinctive way in which Troup contributed to life at South Place and how the relationship between music and the ethical movement may have been different without her contributions.

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<sup>653</sup> R.TRO: *In Memoriam: Emily Josephine Troup*. London: South Place Ethical Society, 1913. Quotation from William Rawlings address at Josephine Troup's memorial service at South Place Ethical Society, Sunday Morning, 20 April 1913.

<sup>654</sup> Harrington, E. J. "In Memoriam". *The Monthly List* 18, no.5 (May 1913): 3 - 4.

<sup>655</sup> Ibid.

<sup>656</sup> R.TRO: *In Memoriam: Emily Josephine Troup*, 1913.

## 9.2 Troup's Upbringing

There is little trace of Troup's early life, except for a short section of an obituary written by Eva Harrington, another South Place musician, for the *The Monthly List*. She wrote that:

...her earlier years were spent among Unitarian surroundings, whence probably she acquired the habit of industry that led her to develop so fully her exceptional and literary gifts, and the keen sense of duty that made her ever anxious to use them as a means of social service.<sup>657</sup>

Although this provides little detail specifically about Troup's childhood, the description of a typical Unitarian upbringing means that a few things can be deduced as to how Troup became such an involved member of the ethical societies. Ruth Watts has written about Unitarian women during the 1850s, when Troup would have been a young child at the beginning of her education and starting to internalise the attitudes of her family and their social circle.<sup>658</sup> Unitarians in the nineteenth century were already convinced that unlimited and rational education was important for both girls and boys of all class. Large attention was paid to studying English and learning how to speak and write well, partly in order to disseminate their own educational philosophy as clearly as possible.<sup>659</sup> Troup used her skills to write for the *South Place Magazine*, as well as composing for the Society, although much less importance was placed on music in Unitarian education, and it is likely that she had extra lessons due to her family's wealth. Watts shows that the Unitarians' egalitarian views on women and education unexpectedly led many women to public life.<sup>660</sup> Examples include Mary Carpenter and Harriet Martineau, whose parents insisted they had a good education, which motivated both women to become role models for many others. Notably, Watts highlights that the distinction between public and private life was often blurred by women's involvement in religious, social and political concerns. This is likely to be how Troup came to be such a prominent figure within the ethical movement. Although

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<sup>657</sup> Harrington, E. J. "In Memoriam". *The Monthly List* 18, no.5 (May 1913): 3 .

<sup>658</sup> Watts, Ruth, *Gender, Power and the Unitarians in England 1760 – 1860* (Essex: Addison Wesley Longman Limited, 1998).

<sup>659</sup> Watts, *Gender, Power and the Unitarians in England 1760 – 1860*, 46 -7.

<sup>660</sup> *Ibid.*, 198.

many Unitarian women still found themselves restricted to domestic life, Troup must have felt empowered by a combination of her education and the ethical movement to be an active member of South Place, where the Society's engagement with religious, cultural and socio-political issues allowed her to cross barriers from a private to public influence. Lifelong Unitarian Elizabeth Gaskell (1810 – 1865) expressed through her writing that women should have moral responsibility for themselves, speak up for themselves, and share in the creation of values.<sup>661</sup> If Gaskell's writing inspired Troup, she certainly lived up to these expectations.

Troup was one of the many South Place musicians who studied at the GSM. Although none of the student records exist any longer, her name can be found in the student concert programmes as a student of composition studying with Henry Gadsby in 1886. At an evening concert on 7 July, Troup accompanied two of her own songs sung by Evan Jones: *The Fountain Mingles with the River* and *Love's Devotion*. Her transition into public life may have been easier than for some other women because she came from an exceedingly wealthy family. During the nineteenth century, a woman was generally defined as 'a lady' if she did not do paid work, which made many women dependent on a man to support their living. For Josephine Troup, who never married, this was not a concern, as she could depend on her family's wealth, thus not losing her reputation by engaging in public work on a voluntary basis. Troup grew up in London with four siblings (of which she was the youngest), her father John Troup and her mother Susanna (née Igglesden).<sup>662</sup> John owned a jewellery and watchmaking business with eight employees, which he inherited from his cousin.<sup>663</sup> The family had several servants at their home in Hackney, where Josephine and her sister Jane continued to live until they were at least 47 and 62 respectively. When Josephine Troup died in 1913, her estate was valued at £46,345, the equivalent of over £3million in 2018.<sup>664</sup> She also left £1000 to South Place Ethical Society, and previously both Troup and

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<sup>661</sup> Ibid., 207 – 11.

<sup>662</sup> "Troup, Emily J." Census Returns of England and Wales, 1861. 7 April 1861. Parents: John Troup (1808 - 1901); Susanna Troup (1810 - 1883) Siblings: Jane Maria (1838 – 1921), Alexander James (1846 – 1930), Susanna Mary (1845 – 1970), Frederick William (1848 – date unknown).

<sup>663</sup> Genealogy Pages. "John Troup, 1808 – 1901: Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies." Last modified 28 October 2010. Accessed June 2018.

<http://www.ourgenealogy.co.uk/tng/getperson.php?personID=I00448&tree=Hale>

<sup>664</sup> £46,345 in 1910 = £3,622,890.61 in 2017: The National Archives. "Currency converter: 1270 – 2017". Accessed August 2018. <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency-converter/>

Swepstone donated unknown amounts to the debt extinction fund in 1899.<sup>665</sup> Troup also donated money for the Society to restore the motto 'To thine own Self be True' on the wall behind the stage after the chapel was redecorated (the same motto is still written above the stage at Conway Hall).<sup>666</sup> It was acknowledged by many people that Troup was very generous with her money, even towards societies in America.<sup>667</sup> While she may have had plenty of this to spare, Troup was also generous with her time.

### 9.3 Contribution to South Place and the Ethical Movement

Although Troup did have a musical career elsewhere in London, performing in the West End, the bulk of her achievements are to be found within the sphere of the ethical movement.<sup>668</sup> In his history of the British Ethical movement, Gustav Spiller acknowledges Josephine Troup as one of the better-known earlier workers in the movement, primarily for developing the musical side.<sup>669</sup> When the concerts came under full control of the South Place Sunday Concert Committee in 1887, it was not long until Troup was asked to accompany and play piano solos. She was also respected by the committee for introducing the violinist John Saunders to the concerts 'before he became too successful'; he went on to become one of their favourite performers.<sup>670</sup> Troup was first asked to perform at the concerts towards the end of 1888, to give piano solos on the same evening that W. W. Cobbett had arranged a string octet to perform octets by Gade and Mendelssohn on 6 January 1889, and was later asked additionally to accompany the string ensemble. Like many musicians at South Place, Troup usually performed at the concerts for little or no fee.<sup>671</sup> However, this money-saving incentive would not alone account for her regular engagements at the concerts as they often turned down other pianists who offered to play for free. Troup must

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<sup>665</sup> £1000 in 1910 = £78,172.20 in 2017: The National Archives. "Currency converter: 1270 – 2017". Accessed August 2018. <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency-converter/>; Details of Troup's will can be found in SPES/1/2/9: Minutes of the South Place Ethical Society, 1908 – 1915; Anon. "Debenture Debt Extinction Fund." *South Place Magazine* 5, no. 1 (October 1899): 13.

<sup>666</sup> Reynolds, W. J. (ed.). "South Place Deficit Extinction and Redecoration Fund." *South Place Magazine* 6, no. 4 (January 1901): 64.

<sup>667</sup> Harrington, E. J. "In Memoriam". *The Monthly List* 18, no.5 (May 1913): 3 - 4.

<sup>668</sup> Bartley, Far from the Fashionable Crowd, 115.

<sup>669</sup> Spiller, *The Ethical Movement in Great Britain: A Documentary History*, 177.

<sup>670</sup> SPES: Concert programme. 15<sup>th</sup> concert of the 34<sup>th</sup> season, 18 January 1920 (Saunders Memorial Concert).

<sup>671</sup> SPES/7/1/3 – 4: Minutes of the Concert Committee of South Place Ethical Society, 1887 - 92.

Examples of Troup not receiving a fee for performance: 9 December 1888 and 7 September 1890 (when 'Miss Robinson' and 'Miss Hemmings' are paid £1/1/- each.

have been considered by the committee and the audience to be a talented and versatile pianist. The following March (1890), Troup was asked again to perform solos at the concerts and accompany the Walem Quartet, and in September of the same year she was invited to join the concert committee. It is unclear why she declined, but there were clearly no hard feelings as she went on to perform as a violinist at the concerts forty-nine times between 1889 and 1902, the majority of her repertoire being made up of German, Nordic and Polish composers. By contrast, Troup was one of the first members of the West London Ethical Society and was an active member of the General Committee between 1893 and 1898. Members of the Society voted Troup onto the committee every year, confirming her popularity as well as her dedication to the wider ethical movement, not just at South Place. She donated money to other ethical societies, and in September 1896 attended the International Ethical Congress held in Zurich, acting as a representative of England, alongside Stanton Coit, Frederick Gould and Rose Hickson.<sup>672</sup> There she would have mixed with other notable members of the movement from across the world, including the founder, Felix Adler.<sup>673</sup>

Whilst Troup was not on either the concert committee or the general committee of South Place, she was often on the organising committee for fundraising and entertainment events. In the brochures for the South Place bazaars, which were often held to raise money for the building, Troup can be found to be contributing musically, running art and book stalls, and even in one instance to be performing monologues in costume. She also often performed for other South Place events, for example at the leaving party for Gould.<sup>674</sup> Another task Troup took on was organising the music for a special monthly soirée that South Place was hosting for all of the London ethical societies in 1900, when she also conducted. In Troup's obituary, Harrington praises the positive way in which she would embrace each task not as too lowly or too arduous, but as if it was her 'special task', even if it was delivering handbills. Troup also contributed to the Society's lecture series. Outside of music, Troup gave papers on topics such as *Environment and Heredity*, in which she argued that investigations had

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<sup>672</sup> For example in 1889 Troup donated -/6/3 to the East London Ethical Society, more information in other ethical society annual reports: BL: 08408.ee.66.: Annual Reports of East London Ethical Society, 1891 – 1900.

<sup>673</sup> Anon. "Kindred Societies" *South Place Magazine* 2, no. 1 (October 1896): 14 – 15.

<sup>674</sup> Anon. "Farewell to Mr F. J. Gould" *South Place Magazine* 4, no.8 (May 1899):124.



proved that a person's character was mostly shaped by their environmental surroundings.<sup>675</sup> She drew together conclusions that understanding that a person's potential is not tied to their ancestors gives people more power to shape their own destinies, giving a reason for everyone to endeavour for human improvement and 'betterment of life'. These conclusions echo the thinking of the ethical movement, that through their work they could enhance people's moral and intellectual capacities and build a better community that conformed to their moral codes and values. Troup's paper led to a lengthy debate about the antithesis between environment and heredity, indicating that the audience took Troup's scientific paper seriously. Her confidence in giving lectures on a topic that was outside her main field of practice, and traditionally a 'male' subject area, may have stemmed from her Unitarian education, where boys and girls were both encouraged to take an interest in science, particularly concerning current affairs.<sup>676</sup>

Her musical lectures included one in 1895 about the life and work of Beethoven, with regular South Place performers, including John Saunders, providing live musical examples to illustrate her explanation of Beethoven's works dividing into three main periods or 'characters'.<sup>677</sup> A fairly large audience was reported, and it was said that those who attended the lecture 'doubtless' had an added interest in the Beethoven concert that evening, highlighting the emphasis that South Place put on the educational nature of the concerts, rather than just the enjoyment of listening to the music. Another lecture by Troup was about Russian music with a focus on Russian folk songs and the New Russian School; an unexpected topic considering her repertoire at South Place contained little Russian music apart from Tchaikovsky. However, a two-page report in the *Ethical Record* on Troup's paper reveals something about the composer's musical taste.<sup>678</sup> After giving a very thorough and knowledgeable lecture with regards to history and musical analysis, Troup put forward her opinion that compositions by the New Russian School were in want of beauty and conciseness of structural form, and she was not enamoured by what she felt to be their liking for 'harsh dissonances, crudities of progression, and noisy, overloaded, ear-cracking feats

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<sup>675</sup> Reynolds, W. J. "South Place Discussion Society." *South Place Magazine* 5, no. 6 (March 1900): 90 – 2.

<sup>676</sup> Watts, *Gender, Power and the Unitarians in England 1760 – 1860*, 49.

<sup>677</sup> Anon. "Notes." *South Place Magazine* 1, no.2 (May 1895): 22 – 24.

<sup>678</sup> Anon. "Musical Notes." *South Place Magazine* 3, no. 8 (May 1898): 122 – 125.

of orchestration'.<sup>679</sup> She concludes: 'Much modern music, not only Russian, may be described as powerful, but also brutal. The first object of music, in my humble opinion, is not to administer physical shocks and nervous thrills; and it is also possible to lose sight in the attempt at realism of the fact that music should be, after all, as much as possible, a realisation of the beautiful and not of the ugly; and that it is by virtue of its very idealistic qualities that it transcends the other arts'.<sup>680</sup> The fact that Troup tended to perform Romantic music by the likes of Beethoven, Chopin and Dvorák (as well as some of their lesser known contemporaries) indicates that this was more representative of her own preferences and influences. Her own compositions are also very reflective of her ideal that all music should represent beauty, which can be seen through her melodically-driven writing and usually carefully thought-through harmonies. Moreover, her concept that all music should strive for beauty coincides with the idealistic vision that comes through her music and poetry writing of a harmonious world where everyone is striving to be the best version of their self, whilst also being wholly unselfish.

By all accounts it seems that Troup was a popular member of the ethical community. Writing about her character is mostly posthumous, so predictably is also wholly positive. However, it is interesting to see the qualities that her friends and peers chose to highlight. Rawlings described her as 'always overflowing with cheerfulness and vivacity, bearing with her an atmosphere of brightness and light-heartedness; and at the same time one of sincerity, earnestness, and depth of character.'<sup>681</sup> Reverend W. Copeland Bowie viewed her as a woman whose '...whole nature responded readily to whatever is true and good; the beautiful in art, music and literature touched a responsive chord in her mind and soul', a reflection that draws on some key themes in her poetry.<sup>682</sup>

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<sup>679</sup> Ibid., 124.

<sup>680</sup> Ibid., 125.

<sup>681</sup> R.TRO: *In Memoriam: Emily Josephine Troup*. London: South Place Ethical Society, 1913. Quotation from William Rawlings address at Josephine Troup's memorial service at South Place Ethical Society, Sunday Morning, 20 April 1913.

<sup>682</sup> R.TRO: *In Memoriam: Emily Josephine Troup*. London: South Place Ethical Society, 1913. Quotation from Reverend W. Copeland Bowie's address from Josephine Troup's funeral service at Golders Green Crematorium, 16 April 1913.

One letter from someone who knew her well stated that ‘her sweet charity and cheerful unselfishness were most inspiring to all who know her’, and these traits can be easily recognised through her contribution of the hymn books that were used by the ethical societies. This was mentioned both at the memorial service and in Harrington’s writing. William Rawlings spoke about *Hymns of Modern Thought*, which was published in 1900 and was compiled by Troup with ‘infinite pains and work’.<sup>683</sup> He also refers to a recently published new hymn book that the Society admitted would not have been published if not for her aid, both in terms of hard work and finance. Harrington refers to both of these, plus a third hymn book that Troup edited and compiled. Due to Troup’s overmodest habit of not associating her name with all of her work, it is difficult to identify to which book Harrington is referring.

#### 9.4 Troup’s Hymns

The hymns sung during the ethical services, particularly at South Place, unassumingly became a vehicle through which members debated the identity of the Society, as is evident in the *South Place Magazine* correspondence in the early 1900s.<sup>684</sup> These debates extended to the wider ethical movement and music became a disputed topic. The intention behind the hymns was obviously to unite members through a communal activity, but they also caused an awareness of a division of beliefs and values between the members of South Place. Troup had a larger role to play in this than has been generally acknowledged. With respect to compiling the hymn books, Troup played a central administrative role. A short exchange of letters between Troup and the South Place secretary, Caroline Fletcher-Smith survives, regarding the copyright of tunes by the former musical director of South Place, Josef Trousselle (1846 – 1893). Having been paid £30 a year throughout the 1870s for his work, Trousselle was unceremoniously dismissed from his position in 1881, following an undocumented discussion between the committee members. In his reply he wrote: ‘In answer to your note I beg to say that I cannot in justice to myself comply with the request of the music committee until I have their reason for such a resolution, as I am not aware that I have

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<sup>683</sup> R.TRO: *In Memoriam: Emily Josephine Troup*. London: South Place Ethical Society, 1913. Quotation from William Rawlings address at Josephine Troup’s memorial service at South Place Ethical Society, Sunday Morning, 20 April 1913.

<sup>684</sup> This is discussed further in Chapter 4.

given any cause for complaint'.<sup>685</sup> The only instance of controversy documented in the minutes happened in May of that year, when Trousselle opposed a suggestion to reduce the choir to four people and asked for some time to enable the choir to improve, after which the proposal was withdrawn.<sup>686</sup> Yet he was soon replaced as conductor and organist, and subsequently a number of copyright issues arose regarding his compositions for the Society. The committee regularly opted to choose a different hymn or song rather than pay Trousselle for his work.<sup>687</sup> In the case of Troup's enquiry requesting copyright of Trousselle's hymns for *Hymns of Modern Thought*, Rawlings claimed that as Trousselle wrote the hymns for South Place, the copyright belonged to the Society rather than the composers. Troup asked Fletcher-Smith to put this forward at the next committee meeting, who did grant Troup permission to use the hymns and to change the words of 'It's time to live for something, be not idle', as Robertson found Trousselle's original wording to be 'beneath contempt'. Troup's response is very gracious, and she promises to thank the Society in her preface.<sup>688</sup>

Aside from doing much of the administrative work in curating the hymns, Troup also financially supported and curated three ethical hymn books, as well as the ones for children.<sup>689</sup> *Ethical Songs*, published in 1892 is credited to a small committee of compilers, but Troup wrote in her letter to A. S. Toms that Coit had asked her to compile it for the use of the Leighton Hall Neighbourhood Guild.<sup>690</sup> Given accounts of her modest nature and habit of using pseudonyms, it is unlikely that Troup would have been exaggerating her role in this case. However, this also hints that it was her own choice not to be named as editor in the published version of the book.

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<sup>685</sup> SPES/7/1/1: Minutes of the Music Committee of South Place Religious Society, November 1881.

<sup>686</sup> SPES/7/1/1: Minutes of the Music Committee of South Place Religious Society, May 1881.

<sup>687</sup> Such as 7 May 1885 when they rejected an offer of copyright to several compositions for ten guineas; also 15 Feb 1888 it was agreed to swap Trousselle's setting of no. 484 'It fortifies my soul' (contralto solo) for 'Happy is the man' because Trousselle required £1/1/ for a copy of his hymn. See: SPES/7/1/1: Minutes of the Music Committee of South Place Religious Society, 1877 – 1888.

<sup>688</sup> SPES/7/1/2: Correspondence between the Society and E. Josephine Troup. Letters to Fletcher-Smith dated 19 September 1899 and 10 October 1899. Incidentally, within these letters, Troup mentioned that she had just got back from Whitby where she had been with Miss Blyth and commented on the delightful scenery of the coastal area.

<sup>689</sup> Harrington, E. J. "In Memoriam." *The Monthly List* 18, no.5 (May 1913): 3 - 4.

<sup>690</sup> Leighton Hall Neighbourhood Guild Committee. *Ethical Songs with Music*. London: Novello, Ewer and Co., 1892. Conway Hall Library: 782.4ETH

As well as not being listed as the editor of *Ethical Songs*, it seems Troup was taken advantage of for the creation of her next hymn book.<sup>691</sup> There is no reference to Troup as editor in *Hymns of Modern Thought*, although as no note of thanks is given to Troup in the preface alongside others who wrote new music for the book, it is clear that Troup was the author of the preface, signed 'The Editor'. In other correspondence it is also made clear that Troup was mostly responsible for the collection. When it was first published in 1900, W. J. Reynolds reported that copies were now available from the South Place library, and acknowledged that Troup had devoted much time and thought to the book. He praises the collection for serving the needs of Ethical Societies and other communities where there has been such demand for music clear of dogmatic theology whilst remaining elevated in tone. Yet, he patronisingly adds: 'Possibly the poet that shall fully voice the ideas and aspirations of the new age is yet to come', insulting not just Troup, but the many others whose work was included in the collection.<sup>692</sup> He justifies his comment with an overly poetic statement that condenses to something like 'very good for an early attempt at such a collection', maybe a fair comment but perhaps unnecessary in the context of promoting a new work by one of their most loyal members.<sup>693</sup> Nevertheless, when the South Place edition was published in 1912, its release was reported in the *South Place Magazine* with special thanks to Troup and great enthusiasm for its potential, with the hope that it would lead to an improvement in the congregational singing.<sup>694</sup> Sadly, by July 1913, the Publications Committee were unable to report on any sales of the new hymn book. It was, however, used for the services at South Place for many years.

Also, in a letter to A. S. Toms, Troup disclosed that *Hymns of Modern Thought* was her second endeavour at publishing a book of ethical hymns. It was originally compiled for the use of Leicester Secular Society and published in 1900. In 1912 it was republished as a special edition for the ethical societies. The book was widely used and Troup left it to the Hampstead Ethical Society in her will, along with £100 towards its continued

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<sup>691</sup> Leighton Hall Neighbourhood Guild Committee, *Ethical Songs with Music*, 1892.

<sup>692</sup> Reynolds, W. J. "Hymns of Modern Thought." *South Place Magazine* 5, no. 7 (April 1900): 112 – 13.

<sup>693</sup> Ibid.

<sup>694</sup> Anon. "Notes and Comments – Our new hymn book." *The Monthly List* 17, no. 11 (November 1912): 4.

distribution.<sup>695</sup> This was the hymn book that sparked debate among the South Place members as to the value and appropriateness of hymns and music in the services (see Chapter 4.1). Troup was one of the first to respond to Toms' initial article, although she did this privately, through a letter rather than publicly via the magazine. While this may presuppose a shyness, modesty or embarrassment in her response, the content of her letter shows a very different side of her personality. Her writing is direct, considered and honest, and reveals a confidence that does not come across in her peers' writing about her. She wrote:

One of the poems you criticise as unsuitable – 'Creeps into thy narrow bed' – was in the Ethical Songs at Dr. Coit's desire, and as I like my setting, and it was often sung at the West London (tho', naturally, without gusto!) I included it again. Do you think it is wrong to omit verses when they are theological? I must say I do not feel that.<sup>696</sup>

It makes much more sense to attribute this type of personality to a woman who was clearly both radical and productive than the words in the memorial book sometimes suggests. The letter also reveals her thoughts on music and the movement, and what it was from her own core values that steered her strong connection to the ethical movement. It also shows how other members of the Society treated Troup, and indicates that not all members of South Place were living up to the Society's feminist agenda. Frederick Gould, who had been a South Place member but now worked for the Leicester Secular Society (LSS), had asked Troup to compile a book for the LSS, where he had recently become a member.<sup>697</sup> Yet when it came to actually compiling the book, it seems Troup's opinions were cast aside in favour of Gould and Robertson's views, who desired no reference to the salvation of religion whatsoever. This seems to be a logical position for a secular hymn book, but it raises the question of what Gould wanted from Troup if not her input on the choice of hymns. There are several references to the fact that Troup contributed financially to the hymn books, and also

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<sup>695</sup> Details of Troup's will can be found in SPES/1/2/9: Minutes of the South Place Ethical Society, 1908 – 1915.

<sup>696</sup> SPES/5/2/3/3: Letter from Josephine Troup to A. S. Toms, 1913

<sup>697</sup> Ibid.

that she gave up copyright of her own hymns at Coit's request.<sup>698</sup> It is therefore a reasonable suspicion that Gould was more interested in Troup's willingness to finance, administrate and write new music for no fee than her opinions on how the hymn books should be compiled to best suit the Society. She writes in her letter to Toms: '...I remember being amused at their ruling out "A little child in bulrush ark" (an old favourite at S.P. in Fox's time)', because there never was no Moses!' (sic), showing the extent of how much the men wished to avoid any religious references.<sup>699</sup> Judging by the tone of her letter, it seems unlikely that she did not voice her opinions to her colleagues, and more likely that they were overridden.

Such heavy involvement with the LSS highlights that she had secular beliefs. Troup's association with South Place was not tied to its religious past; she was engaged with the secular outlook of the ethical movement. Her wish to keep hymns with religious connotations appears to be more out of a respect for the South Place traditions and the pleasure it brought the congregation, rather than wanting to reference religion. The fact that she is not worried about keeping religious text in the hymns, even though her own poetic writing is secular, shows an ambivalent attitude towards the matter. A longing for religious music based on tradition goes against the views of Emerson (1803 – 1882), whose thinking was at the core of the ethical movement. He believed it was wrong for people to live based on societal norms, including religious traditions. Troup's lack of concern, even amusement, over the references to Moses, is much more reflective of Felix Adler's school of thought (the founder of the ethical movement), who believed the movement should embrace all forms of deism, theism and atheism, and act as a separate institution that could unite everybody into the same moral and philosophical code. As Troup compiled the hymn book for the Secular Society rather than South Place, who later 'adopted' the hymn collection after it was published, Troup's work may have added to the confusion about the beliefs of the ethical movement. Yet, as she later adds, she was not against omitting verses that were based on theology, and questions why Toms would think this to be a problem. However, if Troup had been given full control over the hymn books, they almost certainly would have contained more theological references with the expectation that the

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<sup>698</sup> Ibid.

<sup>699</sup> Ibid. The hymn referred to is: Hymn 61 in Fox, *Hymns and Anthems*, 1890. 782.4HYM

congregation overlook the issue. This would have not worked for the Secular Society and would have caused even more confusion for the South Place members, who were already unsure about the few references to religion that remained. Despite Troup's involvement in both secular and ethical societies, it does seem that more distinction was needed between a hymn book for each community. Whilst Charles Watts said in a speech to the St Pancras Ethical Society that the spirit of the secular movement and of the ethical movement was fundamentally the same, Royle asserted that the relationship between the two movements was more ambiguous.<sup>700</sup> Therefore, the hymns originally compiled for the Secular Society may not have been entirely appropriate for the ethical societies. The different attitudes between Gould, Robertson and Troup highlight the varying opinions and approaches to rationalism that existed between members of these societies who shared the same fundamental beliefs.

Towards the end of her letter, Troup writes: 'I feel that every member must feel that it is not possible for him to be indifferent and apathetic if he takes some little communal part in expression', adding that if she were to compile another hymn book, she would take out all the unmanageable metres and personal songs. She boldly adds: 'I believe a congregation is dead, or at least critical, without singing'.<sup>701</sup> Community and shared experience were clearly very important to Troup who also considered it essential to a successful movement. Community was at the core of Felix Adler's vision of the ethical movement. In his article 'The Freedom of Ethical Fellowship', Adler wrote that two key aims of the societies were: 'Co-operation for moral ends' and 'to unite men of diverse opinions and beliefs' in a common endeavour.<sup>702</sup> Many of Adler's philosophical influences also placed an emphasis on community, particularly Kant.<sup>703</sup> Furthermore, Coit believed that community and connecting with people outside of one's immediate circle were crucial to the success of his neighbourhood guild. Troup and Coit knew each other at least in a professional context, and both appear to have similar outlooks on many topics.

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<sup>700</sup> Royle, *Radicals, Secularists and Republicans*, 250.

<sup>701</sup> SPES/5/2/3/3: Letter from Josephine Troup to A. S. Toms, 1913

<sup>702</sup> Adler, F. "The Freedom of Ethical Fellowship." *International Journal of Ethics*, 1, no. 1 (October 1890): 16 – 17.

<sup>703</sup> Payne, Charlton and Thorpe, Lucas (eds.). *Kant and the Concept of Community*. Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2011.



*Hymns of Modern Thought* includes some of the hymns from the *Ethical Hymn Book*, along with many traditional hymns but also contemporary hymns from herself and others, creating a balanced mix of old and new music. Troup uses the preface to thank the composers who contributed their hymns to the book for either a nominal or no fee at all, and gives special thanks to the eight people who contributed original music written specially for the book, including five hymns by Edith Swepstone, who was no longer a member by 1912. Other women who contributed to the collection with specially written hymns include Mary B. Elliott, who wrote three, and Florence Marshall, who wrote two. Most of the other hymns were written by men, other than two by Theresa Beney, who contributed her work for free, and 'Fellowship' which was written by Eliza Flower (1803 – 1846), a significant prior member and musician of South Place Chapel. The only other hymn written by a South Place member of the time was 'True Victors' by H. Smith Webster, written to words by the early nineteenth-century minister W. J. Fox. Interestingly, there are also six hymns that are accredited to the South Place Ethical Society, with no composer mentioned. Each hymn is quite individual in musicality and subject matter, however the first three share similarities in their fast, steady tempos and short, triumphant, melodies (around 16 bars) which are repeated for three or four verses in total.

Troup wrote more original hymns for the movement than anyone else. In *Hymns of Modern Thought* alone, she contributed an impressive 63 of her own hymns.<sup>704</sup> The collection is divided into themes, forming a proto secular liturgy based around regular topics that formed that basis of the secular and ethical society services. Many of these theme headings are based on core aspects and experiences of human existence: 'Truth', 'Freedom', 'Conscience', 'Aspiration', 'Nature' and 'Innocence' all fall within this category. Others themes are more focused on community building and social elevation, such as: 'Fellowship', 'Patriotism', 'Work and Action', 'Hope and Progress', 'The Power of Goodness', 'The Influence of Training', 'Self-Control', 'Stoicism' and 'Patience'. Other headings, including 'Faith in the Future', 'True Worship' and 'Inspiration of Life' are reflective of South Place's object of 'rational religious sentiment', and some such as 'The Ethical "I am"' and 'Happiness from Within' are more self-reflective. The other main category in the book is hymns for specific times or

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<sup>704</sup> Troup, *Hymns of Modern Thought*, 1912. Hymns by Troup listed in the index.

occasions. These headings include: 'Morning', 'Evening', 'Spring', 'Summer', 'Autumn', 'Christmas', 'For the close of the year', 'New Year', 'Dedication', 'Welcoming of a Child', 'Marriage', 'Loss of Friends', 'Burial of Friends' and 'For a Funeral Service'. Collectively, the themes that make up the hymn book offer a way of navigating the year and the fundamentals of human experience without drawing on biblical references. As hymns that were designed to be sung by congregations, they form a crossover between elevation and entertainment that Royle spoke of as central aspects of secular chapel life.<sup>705</sup>

Each themed section in the collection contains hymns that are mostly secular, altruistic and progressive. One of the most popular hymns was 'Raise Your Standard, Brothers', composed by Troup to words by Spiller, which also appears in *Ethical Hymn Book With Music* and *The Labour Church Tune Book* as well as the children's collections.<sup>706</sup> The words of the hymn allow for a wide appeal to any secular congregation, especially the chorus: 'Human love our master/Human love our lord'. The chorus is also set over a punchy, memorable melody, that is easy to sing 'with vigour' as instructed. The verse is slightly more forgettable, due to a fairly rushed move from the tonic (G major) into B minor within the opening two lines, ironically causing the word 'inspire' in the first verse to fall on a rather uninspiring cadence in bar eight. In fact, the final note in the bass line sounds so much more likely as an A (instead of a B) that it almost looks like a mistake, especially as most of Troup's hymns prove her to be an imaginative and proficient composer, particularly considering the large number she produced.

Rawlings said that Troup's work 'always reflected the fine tone and temper of her mind', which comes across strongly in her hymn writing and her choice of words.<sup>707</sup> It is clear that composers like Lehmann, White and Swepstone were inspired to write music to literature that they had read and respected. Supposing that Troup treated her choice of literature in a similar manner, the hymn books indicate the wide range of literature that she enjoyed and felt could be appropriately expressed through music. In

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<sup>705</sup> Royle, Edward. *Radicals, Secularists and Republicans: Popular Freethought in Britain, 1866 – 1915*, 127 – 9.

<sup>706</sup> Coit, Stanton, O'Neill, Norman and Spiller, Stanton, *Ethical Hymn Book with Music*, 1905; Pierce, T. A. *The Labour Church Hymn & Tune Book*. Nottingham: Labour Church Hymn and Tune Book Committee, 1912. Conway Hall Library: 782.4LAB

<sup>707</sup> R.TRO: *In Memoriam: Emily Josephine Troup*, 1913.

*Hymns of Modern Thought* alone, Troup composed music to words by twenty-five poets. It is a diverse selection, including a few female writers including: Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Louisa S. Bevington, George Eliot, Harriet Martineau and Emily Taylor. Among the men, there are some who were obviously selected for their connection to the ethical movement, such as Felix Adler, Moncure Conway and Gustav Spiller, and others who were better known for their poetry, such as Longfellow, James Russell Lowell, Swinburne, John Greenleaf Whitter, Tennyson and Wordsworth.<sup>708</sup> Many of them are connected through similar religious backgrounds, many coming from Unitarian or dissenting churches, who then experienced religious doubt or turned to secularism. Similarly, many expressed strong political views in their writing and spoke about radical topics.

Many links can be drawn between some of the female poets and Troup. Perhaps most directly, Harriet Martineau came from a Unitarian background like Troup, and regularly lectured at South Place earlier in the nineteenth century. Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806 – 1861) also had links to South Place along with her husband Robert Browning, who both wrote for the Society's magazine around the same time as Martineau. In one of her best-known poems, *Aurora Leigh*, Elizabeth Barrett Browning explores different religious themes whilst tracing the story of a female writer attempting to balance work and love, which may have chimed with both Swebstone and Troup who had successful careers but never married. Emily Taylor also has noticable comparisons to Troup, as a London-based poet, children's writer and hymn writer with a Unitarian background. And whilst there is no proof, it seems highly likely that the poet Louisa S. Bevington would have known Troup, through her writing for an ethical society magazine, and her interests in philosophy, nature and evolution. Troup may have simply selected these poems because of their relevance to the ethical 'liturgy', but perhaps the ways in which Troup was able to identify with the writers also inspired her as a composer.

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<sup>708</sup> Other texts are by Grant Allen, Matthew Arnold, Horatius Bonar, Arthur Hugh Clough, Alex J. Ellis, John Harris, Samuel Johnson, John Keble, Charles Kingsley, William Morris and Malcolm Quin.

## 9.5 Hymns for Children

Troup was also one of the key organisers for the children's services, which had an average attendance of 25 in 1888.<sup>709</sup> They followed the format of a Sunday school, which Unitarians began to run in the eighteenth century with a wider focus than just religion, aiming to provide a well-rounded rational education for both sexes. In the nineteenth century many of the Secular societies also ran Sunday schools, but with varying success.<sup>710</sup> The South Place Sunday Services for children included music interspersed with addresses by South Place members and guests, such as Virchand Gandhi, F. J. Gould and Conway. Troup always gave an address on a range of topics. One from 1895 was about the struggles of growing plants and the lessons they teach.<sup>711</sup> She also spoke at the children's social evenings, which included tea and dancing.<sup>712</sup>

Significantly, she wrote many original hymns and compiled a number of children's hymn books intended for use at home and in schools. One of the collections used at South Place was the *Everyday Songs for Boys and Girls* (1897).<sup>713</sup> The books were part of a series published by Novello called *Novello's School Songs*, edited by W. G. McNaught. Troup's books were printed in London and New York, and sold in the UK at a cost of one shilling and advertised in *The Musical Times*.<sup>714</sup> Each book was dedicated to Felix Adler, founder of the New York Ethical Society, indicating that it was distributed at their ethical society, and that she may have had a closer relationship with Adler than mere acquaintance. An article in the Ethical Record from 1903 confirms their use at the South Place children's services that Troup led, and Conway Hall library currently has series one and series three of the collection, but it is unknown how many were made in total or where the rest may be. Every hymn in each collection is composed by Troup, whilst the actual hymn writing was taken from her own poetry as well as others.

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<sup>709</sup> SPES/1/1/3: Annual Reports of the Committee of South Place Ethical Society, 1888.

<sup>710</sup> Royle, *Radicals, Secularists and Republicans*, 320.

<sup>711</sup> Anon. "Children's Services." *South Place Magazine* 1, no. 3 (June 1895): 31.

<sup>712</sup> Reynolds, W. J. (ed.). "Notices." *South Place Magazine* 5, no. 3 (December 1899): 47 - 50.

<sup>713</sup> Troup, Josephine. *Everyday Songs for Boys and Girls: First Series*. London: Novello and Company, Ltd., 1897. First and third series available at Conway Hall Library: 782.7TRO

<sup>714</sup> "Brief Summary of Country and Colonial News." *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* 38, no. 655 (1897): 627-28. One shilling in 1910 = £3.91 in 2017: The National Archives. "Currency converter: 1270 – 2017". Accessed August 2018. <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency-converter/>

Alongside the moral messages that come through the hymns, her preface sets up the objectives of the hymn book but as a result also reveals more about her perceptions on how music should function within the movement. Primarily, she appeals to composers, asserting that since music education had improved in boarding schools and musical progress was ‘permeating everywhere’ more serious music should be written for children. She writes:

All musicians will agree that early training in the use of vulgar and hackneyed musical phrases is not now necessary on the score that a child is unable to execute or enjoy anything better. I would plead with our foremost composers that they should not disdain the making of vocal music for children, but devote more time to a branch of composition which has so much to do with forming the public taste of the future.<sup>715</sup>

This highlights how she saw music as a vital part of education, even though throughout her Unitarian education more importance would have been placed on other subjects. She also believed music had the ability to build the sort of character who the members of the Ethical Society aspired to create. It also ties in with the later discussions following A. S. Toms’ article, about how engaging the youth in singing ethical songs would encourage them to sing at the regular services, which would ultimately be a driving force behind the continuation of the movement. Troup goes on to write about the similar importance of the words accompanying the music: ‘There is no reason why these should be poor jingling rhymes, trivial or meaningless. Why should not the opportunity be taken to store the memory of the little singers with something worth remembering – some thought of moral aspiration and resolve, some reminder of a stirring ideal?’<sup>716</sup> Once again, this draws a strong link between music and the development of a person’s character towards becoming an exemplary member of the Society, reflecting Coit’s ideas about music’s moral influence.

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<sup>715</sup> Troup, *Everyday Songs for Boys and Girl*, 1897. Preface.

<sup>716</sup> Ibid.

The hymns themselves reflect the ambition of the preface. The words, whilst clearly aimed at children in their subject references, are full of moral guidelines for children to follow. This was a typical feature of texts written by Unitarians earlier in the nineteenth century, who were among the first to write specifically for children. Yet, while some criticised the heavy didacticism, evidence of several editions of published works suggests they were popular. Troup would have learned from similar texts herself, such as Lucy Aikin's *Poetry for Children*, probably influencing Troup's writing of children's hymns.<sup>717</sup> Troup used the writing of a variety of people for the poets, including some prominent members of the ethical movement. Spiller and Troup's popular 'Raise Your Standard, Brothers' was included, as were further collaborations from the pair: 'Years are coming, years are going' and 'Together to be'. There are also several hymns written by Adler, to whom the collection was dedicated, such as 'The City of Light' and 'Splendour of the Morning'. The latter is one of several hymns in the collection that has a more song-like quality to it, as does her setting of Lucy Whitehead's 'When love draws near' and her own hymn 'Evening Song'. As well as Adler, there is a heavy presence of poetry from American writers in the collection, particularly from the New York area. For example, the children's author of *What Katy Did*, Susan Coolidge (1835 – 1905) from Connecticut, wrote 'One little star in the starry night'. James Russell Lowell (1819 – 1891) is the writer of 'The Fountain' and was Professor of Modern Languages and Literature at Harvard University. New York resident Ellen M. H. Gates (1835 – 1920) wrote the popular poem 'If you cannot in the ocean', which became a well-known hymn in America.<sup>718</sup> Troup's setting of the poem omitted three middle verses, one of which had a reference to 'the Savior', and changed the line 'fortune is a lazy goddess' in the final verse to '... a bashful goddess', obviously trying to avoid any negativity in the collection and instead imply a well-regarded modesty.

The association with Adler, other American writers and the New York publishing suggests Troup had a strong link with the New York Ethical Society, but others in the collection were taken from the writing of religious figures and adapted to avoid

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<sup>717</sup> Watts, *Gender, Power and the Unitarians in England 1760 – 1860*, 51.

<sup>718</sup> Julian, John. *Dictionary of Hymnology: New Supplement*. London: John Murray, 1907. Appendix.

theological references.<sup>719</sup> 'Would you gain the best in life' was written by New York born Christopher Ruby Blackall (1830 – 1924) who managed a branch of the Baptist Publication Society and worked with the Sunday Schools. From his poem Troup changed a reference to Satan to 'evil' and changed 'God and truth' to 'love and truth'. Troup also used the writings of an American Unitarian minister, James Villa Blake (1842 – 1925) for 'The day is done', showing that despite moving away from Unitarianism she was not too disassociated from her religious background. She may even have had a more fluid religious outlook than her passion for the ethical movement suggests, in line with David Nash's arguments in regards to the Victorians, that their lines of thinking were more transitory than is often suggested.<sup>720</sup>

Another example is 'I'd make my life a little light', which adapts words from a poem by the nineteenth-century writer Matilda Betham-Edwards, with the writer's permission. The original religious version of Betham-Edwards' poem was adapted by many composers into hymns that appeared in a range of collections between 1870 and 1960.<sup>721</sup> By changing the opening lines such as 'God make my life a little flower' and 'God make my life a little song' into 'I'd make my life...', Troup makes the poem less passive and dependent, and the hymn becomes more personal, encouraging the young singers to be active agents in making the world a better place. Like many of Troup's compositions, the hymn consists of simple rhythms and melodic phrases, accompanied by more unusual and affecting harmonies. The short eight-bar verses are written in two-part harmony, with a piano accompaniment that extends for another four bars in between each verse. The soprano line is straightforward and the opening two-bar melody repeats for the third line of the hymn. However, the alto line may be a little more difficult for children to learn immediately, particularly in bars 3 and 4 of the verse, which briefly goes into F $\sharp$  minor and goes through a cadence of VII – III – V7c – I, making the alto line slightly awkward, even though it sounds pleasant as part of the other harmonies. The final cadence of the sung verse is much more conventional (IV –

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<sup>719</sup> Other writers and corresponding hymns: Ellis Walton: 'Daisy, Pretty Daisy' and 'Echoes'; H. K. Lewis (1823 – 1898) medical publisher and children's hymn writer: 'What can I do today?' and 'A little daisy showed its head'; John S. Dwight (1813 – 1893) musician and writer: 'Sweet is the pleasure'; Leon Herbert: 'Little by Little'; Charles Mackay (1814 – 1889) writer: 'If I were a voice'.

<sup>720</sup> Larsen, *Crisis of Doubt: Honest Faith in Nineteenth-Century England*, 1 – 17.

<sup>721</sup> Hymnary.org. "God Make My Life a Little Life." Accessed July 2018.  
[https://hymnary.org/text/god\\_make\\_my\\_life\\_a\\_little\\_light\\_within](https://hymnary.org/text/god_make_my_life_a_little_light_within)

V – I) and subsequently much easier to sing, but Troup livens it up with an exchange of the melody between the alto and the soprano lines in the penultimate bar. Troup also keeps the four-bar piano passage interesting to listen to with a secondary dominant chord (E major) in bar 14 that saves the music from feeling static and prepares the final cadence. These small features show that Troup stuck to what she set out to do in her preface, creating thoughtful hymns for children whom she believed to be capable of a bigger challenge than they were sometimes offered in other hymn music.

Playing and listening to the music gives a clearer sense of how much these collections must have been a labour of love for Troup. It is no standard hymn collection; each hymn has an individual character of expression, and thought has clearly been put into writing hymns that would enhance the sentiment of the words and be enjoyable for children to sing. Some of the hymns are vigorous and energetic, whilst others are subtle and reflective. Even if they did not have the longevity that Troup may have hoped for, the collection was definitely used at South Place, probably in New York and possibly elsewhere. Her efforts were probably entirely self-motivated, but she clearly felt it was very important for the societies and the children to have these hymns, highlighting her passion and faith in the movement and in music. Obviously, the hymns are now dated and not very relatable because of their strong connection to the nineteenth-century ethical movement and middle-class Victorian morality. However the uniqueness of this collection and the effort that one person put into it make it a rather special relic of its time.



Example 17 - Troup's 'I'd make my life a little light', bars 1 – 16<sup>722</sup>

No. 511. Price 1d.

NOVELLO'S SCHOOL SONGS.

## I'd make my life a little light.

TWO-PART SONG.

Words by MATILDA BETHAM-EDWARDS.  
(Altered by kind permission.)

Music by E. J. TROUP.

LONDON: NOVELLO AND COMPANY, LIMITED; AND NOVELLO, EWER AND CO., NEW YORK.

*Allegretto.*

PIANO.  $\text{♩} = 80.$

*dolce.* *rit.*

SOPRANO.

1. I'd make my life a lit - tle light, With - in the world to glow; A  
2. I'd make my life a lit - tle flow'r To be a joy to all, Con -

ALTO.

1. I'd make my life a lit - tle light, With - in the world to glow, to glow; A  
2. I'd make my life a lit - tle flow'r, To be a joy to all, to all, Con -

lit - tle flame to give a light Wher - ev - er I may go.  
tent to bloom in na - tive bow'r, Al - though the place be small.

lit - tle flame to give a light Wher - ev - er I may go.  
tent to bloom in na - tive bow'r, Al - though the place be small.

*rit.* *tempo animato.*

*p* *rit.*

Copyright, 1897, by Novello, Ewer and Co.

( 109 )

<sup>722</sup> Troup, Josephine. *Everyday Songs for Boys and Girls: First Series*. London: Novello and Company, Ltd., 1897. First and third series available at Conway Hall Library: 782.7TRO



Example 18 - Troup's 'I'd make my life a little light', bars 17 – 28 <sup>723</sup>

I'D MAKE MY LIFE A LITTLE LIGHT.

3. I'd make my life a . . lit - tle song To com - fort all the sad; To  
 4. I'd make my life a . . lit - tle staff Where - on the weak may rest, That

3. I'd make my life a lit - tle song To com - fort all the sad, the sad; To  
 4. I'd make my life a lit - tle staff Where - on the weak may rest, may rest, That

help the work - er . . to be strong, And make the sing - er . . glad.  
 so what health and strength I have May serve my neigh - bour best.

help the work - er to be strong, And make the sing - er glad.  
 so what health and strength I have May serve my neigh - bour best.

*tempo animato.*

( 116 )

<sup>723</sup> Ibid.

## 9.6 Chamber music

*Kleines Wiegenlied* is the only one of Troup's purely instrumental works that still has an existing score. Among the absent works is *March of the Workers* for soprano, bass solo, chorus and orchestra, a setting of William Morris' poem and socialist anthem of the same title. His passion for beauty in art likely appealed to Troup's own senses, but the choice of poem indicates that Troup was more involved in socialism than is immediately apparent from her work with the ethical societies. Although the orchestral edition cannot be found, a reduced version was included in *Hymns of Modern Thought*, which was sung during the South Place Sunday Services.<sup>724</sup> It is written for SATB and a piano accompaniment that only joins at the end of the verses and for the short refrain.

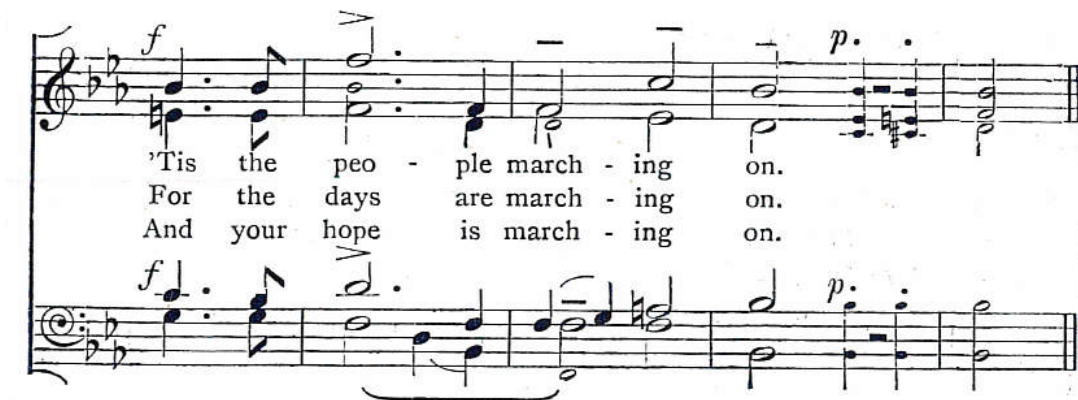
Although the marching metre and rhythms are fairly simple, singing the music a cappella would be a challenge for any congregation, and particularly one that was regularly noted as lacking in spirit. The accompanied section is all sung in unison, and stays in the key of E $\flat$  major, making it quite easy to sing and also gives the music a sense of unity and equality, emphasising the socialist message. However, the hymn has a more complex tonal progression than most hymns, as it more closely follows the modulations of a traditional march. The verses start with a sombre sound in C minor, fitting with Morris's words: 'What is this the sound and rumour?', 'Forth they come from grief and torment?', 'Is it war then? Will ye perish As the dry wood in the fire?'. The verse then quickly progresses to hinting at D major before briefly establishing itself in the subdominant of the final key, B $\flat$  major, with a perfect cadence that ends with a short interruption by the accompaniment of a chromatic harmonic progression that sounds quite unusual in a hymn (Example 19). This is then followed by a move through A $\flat$  major to get to its dominant key (and relative major of the opening key) for the refrain. The music has the potential to sound rousing from an orchestra with a full chorus, but to reach the same effect through the hymn adaptation it would need to be sung with a degree of accuracy and vigour that may be a bit too demanding for the

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<sup>724</sup> For example see: Reynolds, W. J. (ed.). *South Place Magazine*, 2, no.3 (December 1896), when it was scheduled to be sung as the first anthem at the Sunday service on 13 December 1896.

average congregation. However, it was included in at least one of the South Place Sunday Services on 13 December 1896.

Example 19 - From Troup's 'March of the Workers', bars 13 – 17



Troup also wrote a string quartet, *Romanza in C*, which was performed twice at South Place, once in 1906 by the Wessely String Quartet and later in 1912, performed by Saunders, Woodhouse, Yonge and Crabbe.<sup>725</sup> It was not published and unfortunately no manuscript survives in any of the obvious places. Thankfully, Ascherberg, Hopwood & Crew Ltd published the first of her *Six Sketches for Violin and Piano*, although the other five in the collection remain to be found.<sup>726</sup> The first piece, *Kleines Wiegenlied* (Image 41 and 42), was clearly a favourite with the publishers as well as the South Place audience. Between 1910 and 1913, Troup's friend and colleague, John Saunders, performed *Kleines Wiegenlied* three times in the concert series. It is likely that Saunders chose to perform the tune himself, but Clements would not have allowed it to be repeated if he felt the audience did not enjoy it. The 'little lullaby' is a short piece with a simple melodic line and a delicate accompaniment, which arguably fits within the nineteenth-century stereotype of 'feminine music' that women were expected to write. It does appear that Troup put limitations on herself as a composer, with the exception of a few compositions including *March of the Workers*, for which she may have made a special effort on account of the enormity of the poem and its topic. Yet

<sup>725</sup> SPES: Concert programmes: 7<sup>th</sup> concert of the 21<sup>st</sup> season, 18 November 1906; 11<sup>th</sup> concert of the 27<sup>th</sup> season, 15 December 1912. The piece lasted 6 minutes and was probably performed elsewhere as it was not noted to be a premiere.

<sup>726</sup> The first piece was performed recently at 'The Women Musicians of Conway Hall's Past' concert by Eulalie Charland and Maiko Mori. Conway Hall Ethical Society. "Concert: The Women Musicians of Conway Hall's Past." Accessed October 2018.

<https://conwayhall.org.uk/event/the-women-musicians-of-conway-halls-past/>

despite the simplicity of the violin piece, Troup incorporated some clever and unusual features. The piano accompaniment contains a series of secondary 7ths that result in some appealing harmonic progressions throughout the piece. The structure is an easily identifiable ABA form, but when the A section returns there is a surprising move to the tonic minor, before working back to F major to conclude the piece.



Example 20 - First page of Troup's *Kleines Wiegenlied*, bars 1 – 16 <sup>727</sup>

15  
3

## KLEINES WIEGENLIED.

E. JOSEPHINE TROUP.

Andante tranquillissimo.

VIOLIN.

PIANO.

*p sotto voce ma poco marcato*

*sempre legg. pp*

*sempre Ped. una corda.*

*p*

*pslent.*

*pp*

*con sordino*

*pp dolce, teneramente*

*pp*

*pp*

*p*

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<sup>727</sup> Troup, Josephine. *Kleines Wiegenlied*. London: Ascherberg, Hopwood & Crew, 1909. British Library: Music Collections: h.1612.w.(15.)



Example 21 - Second page of Troup's Kleines Wiegenlied, bars 17 – 34 <sup>728</sup>

4

*cresc.*

*cresc.*

*poco rit.*

*poco animato*

*poco f*

*poco animato*

*mp*

*f*

*poco rit.*

*poco più f*

*piu animato*

*p*

*piu animato*

*cresc.*

*cresc.*

A. H. & C. Ltd. 5113

<sup>728</sup> Ibid.

Like most women of her time, Troup supplemented her instrumental writing with a great deal of songs, many more of which were published (over 70, see Table 9). One of her main publishers was Stanley Lucas, Weber & Co., a company that ran from the 1870s to 1900 and published songs by British and European composers, including her teacher Henry Gadsby, and previous director of music at South Place, J. Trousselle. In 1884 *The Graphic* reported that the company had published a 'pretty rustic love ditty' for mezzo-soprano called *Spring Showers*, composed by Troup to words by Robert Buchanan. They also report Troup's *Portuguese Love Song* as being 'of a more ambitious character'.<sup>729</sup>

Her songs consistently received a mix of reviews. Among the worst was a review from 1885 in *The Orchestra* about 'Daddy Longlegs and the Fly', composed by Troup as part of a collection of *Nonsense Songs* with words by Edward Lear. The review says: 'The words are simply stupid rubbish; a man who wants to be funny must be hard up for fun when he writes about "battlecock and shuttledore". The music is a great deal too good for the words. We hope that Emily Josephine Troup will obtain some better words for her next setting, she will have some difficulty in getting any worse or even equally bad.'<sup>730</sup> The upside to these comments is that they are in fact quite complimentary about her work as a composer, just not her colleague's words. Lear's most successful poem, *The Owl and the Pussycat*, was included in this collection.

On the other hand, some reviews of her songs were glowing. In an earlier edition of the same periodical in 1878, three other songs by Troup were reviewed: *I cannot find thee!* (sacred song by Eliza Scudder); *To-day* (poem by Thomas Carlyle); and *Prayer* (imitated from the Persian by Southey). A paragraph of brief analysis is dedicated to each song, with a flattering introduction: 'We have hardly ever seen words and music better fitted than in the above three songs [...] the musical treatment is quite out of the conventional track, and exhibits a freshness and power which are not often to be found in either young or mature composers'.<sup>731</sup> The comment on her age is interesting, particularly as there is no comment on her gender. The same reviewer describes

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<sup>729</sup> "New Music." *The Graphic*, (19 July 1884): 67.

<sup>730</sup> "New Music." *The Orchestra Musical Review* 11, no. 141, February 1885: 221

<sup>731</sup> "New Music." *The Orchestra Musical Review* 4, no. 43, February 1878: 271



Troup's setting for *Today* as 'almost too pretty for its subject. The manner in which it is accompanied, however, quite removes any objection of this kind...', implying that any prettiness in Troup's music would have been considered a weakness.<sup>732</sup> A comparison is made to Mendelssohn's style of composition, although the reviewer finds no direct imitations of his work and therefore compliments her originality. Out of the songs mentioned in this review, *I cannot find thee!* And *Prayer* are both religious songs and were published before South Place became an Ethical Society. *I cannot find thee* was included in one of the hymn books and sung very regularly at the Sunday services.<sup>733</sup>

A few of Troup's songs were performed in the Sunday Concerts. In 1894 Troup accompanied Marian McKenzie, who sang *Unless*, a song with words by Elizabeth Barrett Browning that was performed again at the Women Composers' Concert in 1915. A second edition of *Unless* was published by Stanley Lucas, Weber & Co., and another version was published by Leonard & Co., indicating that it was one of her most successful songs. McKenzie also performed Troup's *Sweetheart* and Troup dedicated her song *Give* to the singer. In 1897, Troup also accompanied her song *Love and Death*, with a cello obbligato played by Charles Ould. On a larger scale, Troup composed a song-cycle of approximately 10 minutes called *An Apparition*, performed for the first time by Franklin Clive and accompanied by Troup at the Sunday Concerts.<sup>734</sup> It was then repeated later in the season by the same pair as part of a Special Concert of British Chamber Music, and again in 1910 by Franklin Clive accompanied by Mrs Fraser Henry, who was to become a member of the SWM between 1914 and 1916.<sup>735</sup> They followed the song-cycle with two more songs by Troup: *The Great Sun, benighted* and *Hark, hark! The Lark*.<sup>736</sup> In neither case were any programme notes written about the song, which may have been expected for a full song-cycle.

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<sup>732</sup> Ibid.

<sup>733</sup> I Cannot Find Thee was programmed for the service: February 1886, April 1886, July 1886, February 1887, October 1887, March 1888, November 1888, 28 March 1896, 29 March 1903. Information found in SPES/7/1/1: Minutes of the Music Committee of South Place Religious Society, 1877 – 1888 and listed in the *South Place Magazine*.

<sup>734</sup> SPES: Concert programme. 4<sup>th</sup> concert of the 13<sup>th</sup> season, 23 October 1898.

<sup>735</sup> Seddon, *British Women Composers and Instrumental Chamber Music in the Early Twentieth Century*, 180.

<sup>736</sup> SPES: Concert programme. 10<sup>th</sup> concert of the 25<sup>th</sup> season, 4 December 1910. Words by Stephen Phillips and George MacDonald respectively. First name of Mrs Fraser Henry currently unknown.

Table 9 - Songs published by Josephine Troup.<sup>737</sup>

<b>Song</b>	<b>Words</b>	<b>Publisher</b>	<b>Year</b>
A little Daisy showed its Head (two-part song)	H .K. Lewis	Novello	1897
A Song of Twilight	A. R. Aldrich	Edwin Ashdown & Co.	1897
An Apparition (Song Cycle)	S. Phillips	Boosey & Co.	1899
Autumn Leaves (two-part song)	E. Swepstone	G. A. Holmes & F. J. Karn	1910
Bells across the snow (three-part song for female voice and piano)	Frances R. Havergal	Augener & Co.	1895
Bells of Mercy (two-part song)	E. B. Lord	Novello (school songs)	1897
Break, Break, break	Alfred L. Tennyson	Laudy & Co.	1908
Caprice	Kathleen E. Royds	Laudy & Co.	1914
Constancy (duet for contralto and tenor)	Anonymous	Stanley Lucas & Weber & Co.	1889
Country Courtship	J. C. Moseley	Cary & Co.	1914
Cradle Song	W. C. Bennett	Stanley Lucas, Weber & Co.	1878
Daisy's Song	J. Keats	Stainer & Bell	1909
Foreshadowings (voice and cello)	E. Swepstone	Augener & Co.	1892
Give (vocal duet)	Adelaide Proctor	Stanley Lucas, Weber & Co.	1889
Golden Gorse (two-part song)	H. G. Hurst	G. A. Holmes & F. J. Karn	1909
Hark! Hark! the Lark!	Shakespeare	Stanley Lucas, Weber & Co.	1887
I Bring a Garland for your Head	Edmund Gosse	Weekes & Co.	1901
I Cannot Find Thee!	Eliza Scudder	Stanley Lucas, Weber & Co.	1878
I worship thee yet	Heinrich Heine	Augener & Co.	1892
Is he sleeping?	E. M. Rutherford	Boosey & Co.	1886
It was a Lover and his Lass (trio for female voices)	Shakespeare	Stanley Lucas, Weber & Co.	1888
Just you and I	M. Nepean	Edwin Ashdown Ltd.	1900
Keen Bows the Wind upon Clebrig's side (four-part song)	W. Black	Augener & Co.	1892
Laughing Song (two-part song for female chorus and piano)	William Blake	G. A. Holmes & F. J. Karn	1911
Love flew in at the window	A. Tennyson	Laudy & Co.	1908
My Lady's Gown	Anon.	Chappell & Co.	1897
Oh, sleep a little while, white Pearl	John Keats	Stainer & Bell	1909
On a faded violet	Shelley	Stanley Lucas,	1884

<sup>737</sup> Not including songs from *Everyday Songs for Boys and Girls*.

		Weber & Co.	
Portuguese Love Song	J. de Vasconcellos	Stanley Lucas, Weber & Co.	1884
Prayer (imitated from the Persian)	Southey	Stanley Lucas, Weber & Co.	1878
Renunciation	K. E. Royds	Laudy & Co.	1914
Rock-a-by-Lady	E. Field	Chappell & Co.	1897
Serenade – Ständchen	E. Busse	Stanley Lucas, Weber & Co.	1878
Shadows of Parting (three-part song)	K. E. Royds	Weekes & Co.	1915
Slumber sweetly, Baby mine	E. Swepstone	Augener & Co.	1893
Song by the River	M. Collins	Stanley Lucas, Weber & Co.	1888
Song by the river (trio for female voices)	Mortimer Collins	Stanley Lucas, Weber & Co.	1888
Songs for Children	Robert L. Stephenson	J. Curwen & Sons	1897
Spring Showers	R. Buchanan	Stanley Lucas, Weber & Co.	1884
Sunbeams thro' her lattice peep	E. Swepstone	Edwin Ashdown Ltd.	1897
Sweet Chloe (trio for female voices)	The 'Graphic'	Stanley Lucas, Weber & Co.	1888
Sweetheart	Edward Croasdaile	Stanley Lucas, Weber & Co.	1887
The Birth of the Daffodils (two-part song)	M. Mitchell	G. A. Holmes & F. J. Karn	1910
The Call (two-part song)	K. E. Royds	Weekes & Co.	1910
The Crocuses' Lament (two-part song)	E. Swepstone	G. A. Holmes & F. J. Karn	1909
The Daddy Longlegs and the Fly (Nonsense Songs)	E. Lear	Hopwood & Crew Stanley Lucas, Weber & Co.	1889
The Duck and Kangaroo (Nonsense Songs)	E. Lear	Hopwood & Crew Stanley Lucas, Weber & Co.	1889
The Owl and the Pussy Cat (nonsense songs)	E. Lear	Hopwood & Crew	1889
The Hill	K. E. Royds	Weekes & Co.	1914
The Incoming Tide	M. Russell	Cary & Co.	1914
The Jumblies (Nonsense Songs)	E. Lear	Hopwood & Crew	1889
The Quest	K. E. Royds	Laudy & Co.	1914
The Return of Prosperone (three-part song)	K. E. Royds	Weekes & Co.	1915

The Rose is Weeping (trio for female voices)	From Bailey's Festus	Stanley Lucas, Weber & Co.	1888
The Singers	Longfellow	J. B. Cramer & Co.	1914
The Throstle Song	A. L. Tennyson	Augener & Co.	1896
To-day	Thomas Carlyle	Stanley Lucas, Weber & Co.	1880
Under the Lattice (serenade with cello obligato)	Noel Paton	Metzler & Co.	1894
Unless	Elizabeth Barrett Browning	Stanley Lucas, Weber & Co. Leonard & Co.	1887 1903
Vivien's song 'In love, if love be love'	Tennyson (from The Idylls of the King)	Stanley Lucas, Weber & Co.	1880
When Love Doth Pace	W. A. Gibbs (from Arlon Grange)	Stanley Lucas, Weber & Co.	1883
When o'er the Hill (mezzo-soprano and tenor)	R. Burns	Stanley Lucas, Weber & Co.	1889

## 9.7 Writing

A small insight into Troup's reading habits can be found through her donations to the South Place library, among them: *The War in South Africa* (J. Hobson), *The Memories of Dean Hole* (Samuel Reynolds Hole), *Anarchy or Government* (Salter and Wallis) and *Ancient Stone Implements of Japan* (T. Kanda).<sup>738</sup> Although it is a diverse selection, the dominance of nonfiction texts does not reflect her creative work. A substantial amount of Troup's writing was published in the *Ethical World*, to which she also subscribed.<sup>739</sup> Again, her Unitarian upbringing shows its influence in her work. Nineteenth-century Unitarians believed that how one learned was as important as what they learned, and therefore often wrote in the form of poetry and fiction as well as nonfiction to put across their ideas.<sup>740</sup> One format Troup chose to write in was through a series of didactic fables, which explore topics of morality and motivate her audience to live a prosperous life. Aesop's fables were particularly popular during the Victorian era, and it seems that Troup has reinvented her own in a similar way to Charles Bennett, who anthropomorphised animals as a way of exploring ethical quandaries and different aspects of human nature. In this case, Troup chose more directly to create characters

<sup>738</sup> Reynolds, W. J. (ed.). "Notices." *South Place Magazine* 7, no. 6 (March 1902): 96.

<sup>739</sup> Reynolds, W. J. (ed.). "Notices." *South Place Magazine* 7, no. 1 (October 1902): 15.

<sup>740</sup> Watts, *Gender, Power and the Unitarians in Great Britain 1760 – 1860*, 51.

of agency for aspects of human nature themselves: Love, Fear and Knowledge. She also uses this type of personification in her poetry. The fables offered the Greeks an opportunity for self-reflection when they suspected their culture was not living up to maximum potential and Troup likely used them as a way of expressing room for development within the ethical community. Her fables emphasise spirituality and humanity over religion, trying to persuade her reader that such a focus would improve society. In his *Rhetoric*, Aristotle argued that in the absence of concrete evidence to prove one's point, a fable could do just as well to support one's argument.<sup>741</sup> It seems that Josephine used this method to support the ethical movement, as she could not prove the absence of God, but she could use fables as a way to support the argument for humanism. Although this may not have been the most direct way to defend the stance of the movement, Troup's approach through poetry, music and fables may well have appealed to some readers more than the on-going debates between other vocal and predominantly male members of the Society in the magazines, which often went round in circles. It could be seen as a clever technique by Troup to reach a different audience. However, it could also be interpreted that Troup was working for the cause within the 'feminine' artistic remit, and did not consider herself worthy of publicly engaging in a more serious form of debate.

A different type of writing by Troup can be seen in her winning entry for a competition in *The Musical Herald* in 1893 (Image 41).<sup>742</sup> The challenge was to write a paragraph of no more than 200 words containing the names of 'buried musicians', with merit awarded for paragraphs with the most names, cleverly concealed in the paragraph whilst still making sense. They received 18 submissions, and Troup won the prize of a guinea for being the cleverest paper. Although this appears to have been mostly for amusement, there is still an underlying message in her writing about the power of perseverance.

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<sup>741</sup> Aristotle, W. Rhys Roberts, Ingram Bywater and Friedrich Solmsen. *Rhetoric*. New York: Modern Library, 1954.

<sup>742</sup> "Prize Competition." *The Musical Herald* no. 544 (1 Jul 1893): 215.

July 1, 1893.]

THE MUSICAL HERALD.

## Prize Competition.

**This Month's Competition.**

We suspend our monthly competition until the close of the summer holidays. The subject to be announced in October will be the most interesting or amusing musical experience during a holiday trip. Competitors will, we hope, bear this in mind.

**Last Month's Competition.**

The usual prize of a guinea was offered for the best paragraph of not more than 200 words containing the names of "buried musicians." Obviously the greatest excellence in this competition is attained by those whose paragraph makes sense, conceals most ingeniously the names, and withal introduces the largest number of musicians. Several competitors introduced more names than the author of the prize paper, but they did it at the sacrifice of sense or continuity, and in some cases the burying involved wrong spelling of the names, an unpardonable fault.

Papers were received from E.J.T., W.L., J.T., Legatus, Sintram, Jack Pack, Mendelssohn, U.U. Aitch, Wallace, N.R.H., Knyveton, Tom Titwillow, Sipahi, Yorkshire, Cymro, J.R.K., Lillie W., Clarissa. Many of these contained, here and there, remarkably good "interments." We award the prize to Miss Emily Josephine Troup, of Upper Clapton, N.E., for the following, which, though it contains only fifty-one names, is on the whole the cleverest paper:—

*This artistic (?) task may cost a heap of pottering, mental, arduous labour; but he who tries not for the bull's-eye, gains not even a gold mark to roll about in his hand, elate with sense of personal smartness and favouring luck. Whether with lack of interest, or acerbity of temper, at the eccentric circumvolutions demanded, I must not sit like cherub in idleness, but bend all my thoughts to this crotchety business, sternly courageous like some saint on rack or sacrificial pagan in immolation. I present the deafest aloofness to passing traffic. Hearing the bell, in indication of visitors at our street door, I lock myself in to ensure general banishment to loud intruders, and wag nervously my ever-digressive pen, murmuring "How hard it is to abridge!" A bee, tho' venturing to my window, subsequently retires to hum melodiously where rustle the massed white flowers of our young green elder bushes. . . . My cats, "Musicus inspirans" and Madame Sara, sat expectant by, with old Eli, best of dogs. . . . Enter Phillis, my servant-lass, useful girl! bringing a chop intrenched in tomatoes tenderly cooked, a grand egg erection on toast, and a plum tart in inviting seductiveness, to refresh the poor paper-stainer.*

Mr. John Tannahill, his musicians so close lining. This it is not we must leave reader the number of names "bachelor" covers B West, Este, and Stern

I, a crusty old bachel Western Highlands on Inn" was a sterling, j sported a wooden leg. in it, lock, or key, barru excepting certain smar which made sleep imp I went out one morni cheroot under the foliage care yielded to peaceful wag nervously, as a bul "It will, I am sure, de new Manchester trousers my hat to notify my cowardly brute with ham I prudently forded a bur a stone dyke, settling in a "Parson," says he, pat cow."

**COI**

**Pict**

SIR,—Tonic Sol-faist at Exeter Hall on the 2 hearing such a leading Sir Joseph Barnby de system and a member however, contained in S the notation justifies Sol-fa notationist. Th a theoretical one, viz:— a pictorial one, inasmi notation, show the ris common with many c result of their experier writer holds that the p little importance to th indicating clearly the q they are major or minc ledge of the key signa pictorial than it first however, who understa its theoretical shortcom

In most cases, the themes of her poetry correspond with themes from the hymn books. Many of her poems draw on several themes at once. The first stanza of *Moods*

<sup>743</sup> Ibid.

describes happy days filled with 'Progress!', as the second describes days when life feels 'old and stale, and skies are grey'. The final stanza urges her reader to use dark times to increase your ability to sympathise, and employ self-discipline and self-control to turn negatives into positives. The renowned writer George Eliot (1819 – 1880) also wrote poems with straightforward moral advice typical of this era, such as *Count That Day Lost*. Similarities between the two writers stretch much further, and the remainder of this chapter will use Eliot as a lens through which to interpret Troup's poetic writing.

### 9.8 Troup, Eliot and Poetry

Many similarities can be drawn between Troup and Eliot, in terms of both their life and work. Eliot was of course the more successful writer professionally, with a demonstrable interest in music. Troup was clearly a much more proficient musician, but neither her writing nor her music ever captured a wide audience. Yet both women, in their various outputs, engaged with similar contemporary social, political, cultural, moral and intellectual topics. They also made similar explorations into religion, ethics and radicalism that they expressed through their craft. Eliot lost her strong Christian faith in the 1840s and it was never fully restored. Yet, she showed respect towards all religions in her writing, similar to the openness that comes across in Troup's attitudes to the hymn books.

It has been said that Eliot had very little sympathy for freethinkers as a class.<sup>744</sup> Nevertheless, Eliot had a few connections with South Place during the mid-nineteenth century. She was influenced by Unitarianism, Darwinism and for a while followed Comte's ethics driven 'Religion of Humanity', based on the ethos 'viva pour autrui' (live for others).<sup>745</sup> In letters to friends, Eliot makes reference to an article by Fox on the suffrage, and the *Hymns and Anthems* collection from which she particularly enjoyed

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<sup>744</sup> Rignall, John, *Oxford Companion to George Eliot* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 17 – 18.

<sup>745</sup> Humanists UK. "George Eliot/Marian Evans (1819 – 1880)." Last modified 2018. Accessed 1 October 2018.

<https://humanism.org.uk/humanism/the-humanist-tradition/19th-century-freethinkers/george-eliot>

playing 'Ancient of Ages'.<sup>746</sup> Among others in Eliot's social circle were Harriet Martineau, who wrote and lectured for the South Place congregation,<sup>747</sup> and Collett Dobson (1812 – 1898), who for many years was the musical director of the South Place Chapel.<sup>748</sup>

Troup and Eliot both regularly use themes of both music and morality in their poetical work. Eliot was a music enthusiast. She played the piano, attended concerts and operas, and hosted musical gatherings at her house. More seriously, she wrote an essay on 'Liszt, Wagner and Weimar', although she emphasised that she was not writing as a music critic, despite evidence in her writing that she had a good understanding of music.<sup>749</sup> Delia de Sousa Correa found music to be an important theme in Eliot's novels, and the same can be said for some of her poetry.<sup>750</sup> Ruth Solie identified that in Eliot's volume of poetry *The Legend of Jubal and Other Poems*, six out of ten poems are about music or musicians.<sup>751</sup> Solie specifically looks at *The Legend of Jubal*, noting the ways that Eliot links music and morality, and deduces that for Eliot, it is always the music and not the musician whose meaningfulness supersedes other concerns.<sup>752</sup> In *Jubal* and some of Eliot's other poems, the protagonists show the poet's own ambivalence about the rights and prerogatives of artists. Bonnie Lisle also suggests that through *Jubal* Eliot concludes that the artist's privilege must be redeemed through suffering, chiming with a Unitarian's heavy sense of duty. Solie also looks at how the Victorians connected music and morality. On the other hand, Eliot noted through *Jubal* how measure and rule in music gave it a moral sense, as did its ability to stir emotion. For Eliot and other Victorians, it also represented a community-

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<sup>746</sup> Letter to Charles Bray (8 October 1851). Fox's article was for the *Westminster Review* in 1824. Letter to Saro Sophia Hennell (16 September 1843). Both from: Haight, Gordon S. (ed.). *The George Eliot Letters* (Newhaven: Yale University Press, 1954).

<sup>747</sup> For more on Harriet Martineau at SP refer back to Chapter 3.

<sup>748</sup> Collett Dobson was also a singing teacher and singer in the Handel festivals at the Crystal Palace 1857 – 97 (*The Leader* (October 1851), 1004). He stayed with Eliot in 1851 and provided musical entertainment with his coadjutor Miss Hinks. Letter to John Chapman (11 September 1851). Haight, Gordon S. (ed.). *The George Eliot Letters* (Newhaven: Yale University Press, 1954).

<sup>749</sup> Rignall, *Oxford Companion to George Eliot*, 2000. Article was written for *Fraser's Magazine* (July 1855).

<sup>750</sup> Particularly in *The Mill on the Floss* and *Daniel Deronda*: Da Sousa Correa, Delia, *George Eliot, Music and Victorian Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

<sup>751</sup> Solie, Ruth, "Music their larger soul": George Eliot's "The Legend of Jubal" and Victorian Musicality' in *The Figure of Music in Nineteenth-Century British Poetry*, edited by Weliver, Phylliss, 107 – 131. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005, 109.

<sup>752</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.



building force, by virtue of its ability to magnify human capacity for sympathy.<sup>753</sup> This strongly reflects Troup's letter to Toms, where she stresses the importance of music for keeping the ethical community alive - a theme that also runs through her hymn books as well as her poetry. These ideas were further explored in Reverend H. R. Haweis's *Music and Morals*, which after being published in 1871 sparked wide interest in the matter. As an educated, musical woman with a deep involvement with ethics, Troup would almost certainly have read this with interest and perhaps it was an influence in her thinking about the ethical hymns and their power.

Another of the most conspicuous instances of Eliot's poetry tying music and morality is *God Needs Antonio*. In this poem, Eliot uses a narrative about Antonio Stradivari to discuss the relationship between God and human, in a similar way to how Blake uses the image of a tiger to question God as creator. Eliot's poem is written in a more contemporary free verse, and while Blake questions what kind of creator God is, Eliot goes further into questioning the power dynamic between God and human in creation, and places Stradivari as a God-like figure ('Tis God gives skill, But not without men's hands: he could not make/Antonio Stradivari's violin/Without Antonio'). Eliot shows great respect for the violinmaker's craft, as well as the power of music to inspire. As Solie highlights, Eliot's writing always focuses on music and power. Allusions to music can be found in many more of her poems.<sup>754</sup> *The Radiant Dark* is a short poem full of references to music and sounds; the protagonist speaks of 'tender broken voice that fills... the list'ning hours' with 'whis'prings' and 'cooings' in a 'low-toned rhythm', using sounds to describe the beauty of the night.

Music is also a theme in some of Troup's poetry, including *The Ideal*. The gloomy description of London is reminiscent of a Dickens novel, but the pallid streak of light referenced in the opening lines, appears to be a symbol of hope. This could easily be interpreted as a reference to God or heaven in the sky. However, knowing Troup's secular views, the light among the darkness of the slums is more likely to represent the hope that comes to the blind boy from playing music, as we discover later in the poem.

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<sup>753</sup> Ibid., 129 – 30.

<sup>754</sup> Other examples of poems and lines related to music: *Day is Dying* - 'Requiem chanting'; *Bright, O Bright Fedalma* - 'Far-off music slowly wingèd'.

Likewise, the violin is referred to as his 'minister of all delight', not a God or religious leader. The poem suggests that music is the saviour of this little boy. It reflects common attitudes within the ethical movement, as well as many Victorian women philanthropists and organisations such as the People's Concert Society, that music has the ability to improve the lives of the lower classes. More than this, Troup seems to suggest that music has a similar power to religion, reflecting the ideas of Walter Pater, who believed that art and beauty are at the centre of man's existence and treats them as a possible substitute for religion.<sup>755</sup> This idea is heightened in the final line, where music is represented as an ideal, almost out of reach. Walter Pater's famous quote: 'all art constantly aspires to the condition of music', also can be compared to Troup's beliefs that music was a superior art form.<sup>756</sup>

Troup and Eliot both wrote with moral conviction. Although Eliot had some radical ideas, the promotion of general wellbeing is at the core of her work. In terms of feminism, Eliot's writing mostly ended up with conventional nineteenth-century conclusions, slightly contrasting her own life as a radical, independent woman both sexually and intellectually.<sup>757</sup> Troup's poetry is also reflective of her character and ideals. A key example of this is one of Troup's sonnets, which was included in the memorial book that South Place dedicated to her. Eva Harrington claimed that *How exquisite is cloud* was an accurate expression of the poet's attitude to life. It emphasises Troup's appreciation of beauty and nature and shows a respect towards those who show caring and selfless love towards others. These observations reflect many other comments throughout the memorial book that refer to Troup's charitable nature.

Also included in Troup's memorial book, was the memorial poem that she wrote in honour of Ellen Conway. It was written and published in 1898, but Rawlings read the poem at Troup's memorial service as she felt the words were entirely appropriate to the poet herself. In *The cruel fangs of pain* Troup describes Ellen Conway as the typical

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<sup>755</sup> Solie, "“Music their larger soul”: George Eliot's “The Legend of Jubal” and Victorian Musicality", 123.

<sup>756</sup> Zon, Bennett. *Evolution and Victorian Musical Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 304.

<sup>757</sup> Rignall, John. *Oxford Companion to George Eliot*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

ideal of an artistic, caring, modest and selfless Victorian women, as shown in these excerpts:

We would not grieve and weep; for she  
Has passed  
Like falling blossom, still all pure and  
white;

Her own bright soul made bright the world  
for her;  
No fond self-pity flickered at her heart;  
She lived outside herself, and with sweet  
art  
Could speak the word that lifts a load of  
care.

These are clearly traits that Troup regarded to be admirable, and according to her friends at South Place succeeded in emulating herself.

The poem also gives us a further glimpse into her personal beliefs. The verse beginning 'No dream of pure souls watching from afar...' confirms her rejection of the concept of heaven but the poem indicates that she feels that people live on in their loved ones' thoughts and memories. Similarly, in the poem *Heaven*, Troup depicts heaven as a 'human dream'. These references are reminiscent of George Eliot's poem *Oh May I Join the Choir Invisible*, particularly the opening lines that continue: 'Of those immortal dead who live again/In minds made better by their presence'. Eliot also dismisses the traditional concept of heaven but places it among the living: 'for here in human souls breathes heaven's air'. Both poems also have a focus on helping others to achieve happiness and selflessness, which is a recurring theme throughout both poets' works. Eliot writes: 'May I reach that purest heaven, be to other souls /The cup of strength in some great agony'. Troup's words describing the late Ellen Conway reflect Eliot's thoughts: 'No fond self-pity flickered at her heart;/She lived outside herself'. Such feelings are linked in many ways to Victorian ideals, but particularly to the ideals of the ethical movement combined with the ideas of the self-sacrificing Victorian woman. Underpinning the connection between the poems, is the fact that Troup wrote music to accompany *O May I Join the Choir Invisible* and furthermore, it was sung at her memorial service, indicating that the hymn had particular significance to Troup. The

congregation at South Place often sang it at the Sunday services.<sup>758</sup> The hymn is printed in *Hymns of Modern Thought* as part of the extra supplement for the South Place edition, but was originally published by Boosey & Co in the *Choralist*. It stands out among the collection. Unlike most of the hymns, which are scored for four-part harmony, there is an *ad libitum* organ part to accompany the four vocal lines. Additionally, rather than repeating the music for each verse, Troup wrote it as a through-composed piece, requiring more effort and more attention on how the music fits with the words.

Sweepstone also wrote a version of this hymn, which is included in the *Ethical Hymn Book*.<sup>759</sup> The two composers took quite different approaches; Sweepstone's being the more traditional, despite her tendency to write more unusual music. The openings are contrasting; Troup has a gentle introduction from the organ, whereas Sweepstone's hymn comes straight in with bold triads with the voice. A similarity lies in the fact that both hymns emphasise and repeat the line 'So to live is heaven', thus reinforcing the sentiment.

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<sup>758</sup> Such as on 20 June 1897 and 25 June 1899. See respective issues of the *South Place Magazine*.

<sup>759</sup> Hymn 105 (103 – 4) in Coit, Stanton, O'Neill, Norman and Spiller, Stanton, *Ethical Hymn Book with Music*, 1905.

Example 22 - Swepstone's 'O may I join the Choir Invisible', bars 1 – 15

**105 O may I join the Choir Invisible.**  
 Irregular.

GEORGE ELIOT. *Andante con moto.* EDITH SWEPSTONE.

*p* *f* *p*

O may I join the choir in - vis - i - ble Of

those imnor-tal dead who live a - gain In minds made

bet - ter by their presence: live In pul-ses stirred

live In pul-ses stirred to gen - e - ros - i - ty, In

*mf* *cresc.*

Example 23 - Troup's 'O may I join the Choir Invisible', bars 1 – 16

O MAY I JOIN THE CHOIR INVISIBLE.

(With Accompaniment for Organ *Ad libitum*.)

(Reprinted by permission of Messrs. Boosey & Co., from the "Choralist," No. 329. Price 1d.)

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E. JOSEPHINE TROUP.

*Andante moderato, espressivo.*

*mp*

ORGAN  
*ad lib.*

SOLO.

*dim. rit.*

*pp*

( 228 )

## 9.9 Conclusions

Troup suffered a long illness that led to her death in 1913, at the age of 60. She continued to work for the ethical movement for as long as she could, but clearly had much more to give. In the final paragraph about her life in the *Ethical Record*, it is hoped that she will be remembered most for her cheerfulness, courage, intellect, and the affection she gave and inspired. It is also written that members of the Society must rejoice in the lasting legacy of her beneficent influence. Sadly, her work has remained unexplored over the last century, however, this thesis has gone some way towards rectifying this neglect and recognising her contributions, particularly to South Place.

Gordon S. Haight said that in the early 1900s George Eliot lost popularity because she was so ponderously intellectual and didactic.<sup>760</sup> Furthermore, when other Victorian writers were being rediscovered post World War One, Eliot remained eclipsed as her insistence on morality and ethics bored the post-war generation. The same could be said of Troup's work, particularly the hymns and poetry, which are saturated with didacticism and zeal. Later though, Eliot's writing was revived and celebrated for the depictions of Victorian life that delved into topics such as social and political history, religion and philosophy. Troup's work has remained in obscurity, although it was never as well known in the first instance. Additionally, chances of a revival would have been small considering her work was so tightly woven with the ethical movement, which itself began to lose its following after World War One.

Nevertheless, her influence through the years of South Place during its transition from a religious to an ethical society shaped its development and the discussions around the Society's new identity. Furthermore, her work was crucial to the way that music shaped the ethical movement and how the societies engaged with hymns. Troup's music furthered the connection between music as a form of rational recreation. Her work with the children's services affected the way a whole generation was introduced to the movement. Even if it did not lead every child to a lifelong association with the ethical movement, her words and music would have been part of their learning from an early age, and may have given them some powerful memories. With regards to shedding light on how feminism and music integrated at South Place, her work

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<sup>760</sup> Haight, Gordon S. (ed.). *The George Elliott Letters*. Newhaven: Yale University Press, 1954.

highlights that although she may not have always gained the acknowledgement she deserved, Troup, through her own determination as well as support from her peers, managed to become an influential member of the Society and a successful musician within this social network. What Troup and the Society failed to achieve was a much broader recognition of her work outside of this remit, and thus she became one of many Victorian women whose work and influence was restricted, and later forgotten.



## Chapter 10. Conclusions

In the 231-year history of Conway Hall, the period between 1887 and 1927 was particularly transformative. The huge economic, cultural and social changes that occurred in Britain over this duration affected almost every aspect of the Society as it converted from a radical religious community into a humanist ethical society. How the members of the Society navigated these changes was undeniably shaped by women from all corners of the Chapel's community, and music was an important tool through which many people discussed, implemented and engaged with the changing identity of the Society. As an isolated figure, Josephine Troup is almost a mirror to the development of South Place during this period. The ambiguities that challenged the Society as it transitioned can be seen in her own difficulties and contradictions born out of navigating herself out of Unitarianism and towards a new theological and philosophical stance. Both Troup and South Place experienced a similar journey, and her story alone reveals a lot about South Place's history.

This thesis is the first time either the topic of music or feminism has been explored in depth in this specific time and setting. Passing references to both subjects have mainly been made in two separate fields, either in literature relating to the Ethical Society, or from a musicological perspective. Through combining these disparate elements and addressing previous acknowledgements that certain areas of the Society's history have been largely neglected, this study has uncovered a pocket of history rich with debate, creativity and progression. The stories of Jessie Grimson, Josephine Troup and Edith Swepstone have enabled a deeper understanding of how much of the Society's support of women's equality was actually put into practice and integrated into the musical activities. This process has interrogated and confirmed Seddon's claim that South Place helped women's position in the professional chamber music world.<sup>761</sup> Taking into account all areas of the Society's events that incorporated music has helped to prove this to an even greater extent, whilst also highlighting a few of the more problematic issues surrounding the treatment and acknowledgement of the women and their work. Nevertheless, South Place offered all three women a place to

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<sup>761</sup> Seddon, *British Women Composers and Instrumental Chamber Music in the Early Twentieth Century*, 51.

develop their musical talents and, along with many other women of their generation, carve a path for future women musicians in traditionally male-dominated spaces, both in the concert hall and within a radical free thought community. Furthermore, in the course of answering questions about the Society's past, a wealth of material relating to three talented musical women whose work has been largely unrecognised has now been collected and examined in more depth than previously. Although many of the women mentioned throughout the thesis had already been studied in detail, the connecting narrative of their association with South Place offers a new lens through which to view their successes.

Focusing on the intersection between music and gender at South Place has revealed that the women musicians made many important contributions. Each of them played a part in widening the repertoire of the concerts in different ways: Grimson through her performance of some unfamiliar music, and Troup and Swepstone primarily through their own compositions. Thus, their music-making directly furthered the committee's aim to introduce their audiences to new music. The positioning of Swepstone's music, often as the first or last major work in the programme, was especially meaningful as it placed her in a dominant space usually reserved for well-established male composers, therefore classifying her as a composer of 'serious' music. In terms of visibility, Grimson's role as principal violinist of an all-male ensemble would also have sent out a positive message about women in positions of leadership. Troup similarly displayed qualities of leadership but in areas more expected of women, steering the musical direction of the Society through her work in the children's services and with the hymn books. She produced an extraordinary amount of work for the Society, and the fact that she did not reach a position of higher authority at South Place is a reminder of the pressure that was put on Victorian women to stay in their place and be modest about their achievements. Troup was often left unacknowledged for her work. Whether this was because she asked to remain anonymous, or it was an unintentional error, the lack of support towards a key contributor to the Society does not reflect the general stance of South Place to promote women's rights. The main way the Society showed their support was through a relatively high proportion of women composers and performers in their programmes, including members of the Society of Women Musicians and those who were vocal about their opinions on feminist topics, including the suffrage

movement. These women, including Mukle, Suart, Smyth, Lehmann, Clarke and Grimson alongside many others, subsequently became either actively or indirectly part of the Society's wider activism surrounding women's equality.

Furthermore, there are conflicting findings about how the women musicians were treated with regards to pay. There are many examples of women performers being paid fairly in comparison to men, showing an enlightened attitude towards an issue that is still relevant. Yet, this hits a point of tension with the fact that many men and women often performed for free. It is obvious that accepting such offers was a way for the committee to save money and as a result needed less donations from the audience. As many of the performers were middle or upper class and could afford to play for free, and many of the audience members were among the lower class, this makes sense in many ways. However, the expectation that Troup and many other women would work for free would have perpetuated the idea that women's work in the arts should either be as a philanthropic service or a domestic hobby, rather than as a profession. As well as being regressive towards women working as musicians, it also highlights that whilst breaking class barriers was at the centre of the Ethical Society's work, they were still operating within a highly class-orientated environment and struggled to apply their ethics wholly to their actions. Money and class were huge factors that enabled women including Troup, Swepstone and Grimson to get to a point where they could make use of the opportunities at South Place, and although there is room for more investigation into this matter, it appears that most women musicians linked to South Place came from similar backgrounds.

On the other hand, following the trajectory of the three women's careers has shown that whilst class boundaries were still fairly rigid, South Place blurred the distinction between a public and private arena, and eased the transition between amateur and professional status. South Place Chapel's origins as a Christian organisation added a foundation of community and therefore a link to morality and domesticity that gave women a higher power of influence that lived on after the Society's departure from religion. The philanthropic nature of the concerts added to the receptivity towards women occupying many roles, from organisation to performance. Additionally, as the concerts introduced performers and composers to their concerts at various stages of

their careers, it was possible for a woman to join the South Place musical community straight from the conservatoire or as an amateur, and work their way up towards becoming a professional musician within the same space. This effect would have been heightened as the concerts rose in popularity, gaining international recognition and high-level performers. The fluidity of the environment and the output of the women also suggests that South Place offered room for musicians to push boundaries and experiment, which may be a key reason why so many musicians kept long associations with the concerts and the Society. Even when Swepstone appears to have cut ties with the Society, her return to help towards the celebration of Clements in 1924 shows that she was still bound to that community. For a time, at least, South Place seems to have acted as a musical home to some of its members.

Another theme that emerged from the study of three relatively unknown women musicians is that the Society played a central role in each woman forming her identity as a musician and shaping the course of her career. One of the key questions posed at the beginning of this thesis was whether the Society had a positive effect on the women's careers. The answer is yes, but in different capacities for each person. This is partly because they were each motivated by different goals. Swepstone and Grimson were driven by musical opportunities, and therefore used the opportunities at South Place as a vehicle for exposure towards wider national careers. Through joining the committee, Swepstone was able to promote her music at the concerts and gain visibility as a professional composer early in her career. The fact that a later review of her orchestral music reported her as principally a writer of chamber music, when prior to South Place she had mainly written orchestral and vocal music, shows that South Place was integral to how she became recognised as a composer.<sup>762</sup> Grimson was similarly integrated into the South Place community at an early stage in her career, which allowed her to meet and work with a large pool of musicians, subsequently opening up more opportunities and raising her status as a violinist. Conversely, Troup's musical output at South Place appears to have been mostly through a passion for South Place and the ethical movement, at least on the surface. It is possible that there was a degree of self-interest involved that she kept well masked, but she certainly did not use the South Place concerts in the same way as some of her colleagues. Both her

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<sup>762</sup> *Bournemouth Guardian* (28 October 1899), 3 – 4.

music and poetry was primarily aimed at advancing the ideas of the ethical movement, thus seemingly serving a higher purpose than simply art for art's sake. As a result, she was temporarily acknowledged by some members as an important figure within their community, representing the Society on an international scale.

In addressing how women affected the musical expansion of South Place, Troup's work is paramount. The hymn books and music that she produced for adults and children were central to forcing members of the Society to question how music should be used to generate a movement driven by a community spirit comparable to the way that music brought together church congregations, whilst simultaneously trying to move away from the influence of religion. Consequently this led to deeper debates about the role of emotion and affect in a movement highly focused on rationality. It is ironic that whilst men philosophised on the value of music at the Society, largely based on their own sentimental connections to music, the women tended to offer more practical suggestions about how to make music work for their cause, subverting the supposed characteristics of men and women during this period. A key significance of the musical activities of the Society was therefore that it encouraged thought and debate both in relation to music and in broader issues. Music stimulated a level of self-reflection that enabled members to consider how to attract new people and build a close yet open community, while also offering education and entertainment. Troup inspired these discussions as well as having her own opinions on the matter, and composers and performers of both genders facilitated these conversations.

A struggle that was faced by women composers in particular was striking a balance around originality on a scale that was often highly subjective and biased. Troup was often complimented on the originality of her compositions, a worthy achievement when, as Seddon has noted, many genres of chamber music were already heavily dominated by male traditions. In hindsight the majority of her music is itself not overly daring. However it is probably relevant that Troup was not trying to break too far from writing songs or music for the ethical societies. On the other hand, Swepstone was aiming for a larger audience, and her music faced more severe judgement. Swepstone's compositions were sometimes criticised for resembling existing music, whereas her more innovative works were in many cases neglected by the musical

community, left unpublished with few performances or reviews. The diversity of her oeuvre could easily have remained in obscurity if South Place had not been one of the more embracing platforms. By writing her own programme notes, Swepstone seems to have been making an attempt to retain a degree of agency over the reception of her work, although this may not have had the effect she was hoping for. Furthermore, the close investigation of the configuration of the concerts has shown that networks and peer support were crucial to the success of the three main women in this study, and likely many other young musicians. The work of Grimson, Swepstone and Troup was intertwined through the hymns and the concerts. There is no evidence to suggest they were good friends, but working together in composing hymns and performing each other's music and together in various capacities suggests that they were at least supportive of each other's work.<sup>763</sup> Likewise, many men at the Society gave invaluable support towards the women's work, without overshadowing their contributions or restricting their agency. Notably this group included Richard Walthew, John Saunders, Charles Woodhouse, Ernest Yonge and Charles Crabbe. As a champion of contemporary British musicians, Alfred J. Clements also had a powerful influence on the significant presence of women musicians in the programming. By promoting a platform where new chamber music could be performed that was not necessarily expected to be published or had not yet established itself as part of the repertoire, he opened an opportunity for women to experiment with new music. Without the anticipation of a possible performance, Swepstone may not have followed through her desire to compose music for ensembles that were at the time rarely heard at South Place or any other chamber concert in London. In turn, Clements' engagement with British women musicians would have helped to raise their profile in the city whilst also offering their audiences a greater diversity of music.

A significant portion of the musical community, including Grimson, Swepstone and Troup, were former students of either the Guildhall School of Music or the Royal Academy of Music. Many of them had performed together during their training and

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<sup>763</sup> SPES: Concert programmes. 5<sup>th</sup> concert of the 11<sup>th</sup> season, 1 November 1896 (Troup and Grimson perform Beethoven's Trio in B $\flat$ , Op. 97 and Gade's *Novelletten*, Op. 29); 26<sup>th</sup> concert of the 14<sup>th</sup> season, 8 April 1900 (Troup and Grimson perform in the same concert); 26<sup>th</sup> concert of the 14<sup>th</sup> season, 8 April 1900 (Troup and Grimson perform in the same concert); 19<sup>th</sup> concert of the season 31<sup>st</sup>, 18 February 1917 (Grimson's quartet performed Swepstone's Quintet in E Minor).

continued to perform with each other outside of the South Place concerts. More South Place musicians likely extended from these contacts. Some musicians, like Troup, entered the South Place musical sphere through their prior connection with the Chapel. Others, like Grimson, entered the South Place music scene through family connection and from there formed new professional relationships. These units created a tight community that inevitably led to the longevity of the concerts and emphasises the sense that the South Place musicians formed a base for themselves that became a musical home to the artists, organisers and their audience.

The series, now known as the Conway Hall Sunday Concerts, is now approaching the momentous figure of their 3500<sup>th</sup> concert. The programmes remain varied. Although there is a large proportion of music by well-known Romantic composers, each season features music by composers of varying eras, nationalities and prominence. Chaminade's name has not disappeared from the programmes, her Trio No. 2 in A Minor, Op. 34 was recently performed by the 'Trio Chausson' ensemble on 23 September 2018. Other historical women musicians in the autumn 2018 season include Louise Farrenc, and Clara Schuman, who is conspicuously absent from the first one thousand concerts. Contemporary British composers Robin Walker, Joseph Phibbs and Clive Jenkins will have new music performed at the concerts this year, and Missy Mazolli's *Harp and Altar* (2009) represents the work of living female composers. Of course, the term 'woman composer' in relation to contemporary musicians is now even more loaded and controversial than it is when being used in a historical sense, but that discussion is far beyond the scope of this thesis. For the purposes of discovering the history of the combined topics of music and feminism in Conway Hall's past, it has been a necessary term. It is relevant that this thesis was completed during the centenary year of the first women in Britain receiving the chance to vote, also in the midst of fourth wave feminism that has been propelled by social media, and furthermore, in a year when there has been substantial media coverage regarding the visibility of historical and contemporary women in music. The BBC published their 'Power List 2018: Women in Music' to celebrate the achievements of women in the industry, and BBC Radio 3 and Classic FM (arguably the two most influential Classical music stations in the UK) have made concerted efforts to highlight more music by

women.<sup>764</sup> Statistics compiled by the 'Donne – Women in Music' project and 'Drama Musica' were widely reported, when they revealed that out of 1445 classical concerts programmed in 2018 across the globe only 76 include a work by a woman.<sup>765</sup> In response to equally low figures in programmes by American orchestras, Jesse Rosen, the president and CEO of the League of American Orchestras, said: 'If you go back in time, this was not a viable career for a woman to become a composer, and so, you have a canon that, by definition, does not have a lot of women composers in it.'<sup>766</sup> Comments such as these made by influential people in today's music industry make it clear why it is still essential to continue uncovering the work of historical women composers, to prove that for many it was indeed a viable career and that there are other factors that have led to the current issues surrounding women's position in the Classical music scene.

A notable recent event within the academic field of feminist musicology was the 'First International Conference on Women's Work in Music', hosted by Bangor University in 2017. Among a large amount of work currently being produced in this area, the occasion sparked awareness that there is still a lot to be done. It is hoped that the work produced in this thesis will open new avenues for future research. One of the greatest overall challenges of the project was collecting and selecting what material to use, as there was such a large amount in very scattered locations. Through presenting information about the concert programmes and lists of music composed by Sweptstone and Troup in tables, it will be easier for musicologists to consider their outputs in future studies, and to give wider acknowledgement of their work. Perhaps even more crucially, it may encourage continued performances of their compositions and the continued search for those that remain unfound. There are many women referenced

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<sup>764</sup> BBC Woman's Hour. "Power List 2018: Women in Music." Accessed October 2018. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0695d4c>; BBC Four. "Unsung Heroines: Danielle de Niese on the Lost World of Female Composers." Accessed June 2018. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0b6znwz>; Debbie Wiseman hosted a programme on Classic FM called 'Sounds and Sweet Airs' inspired by the book: Beer, Anna. *Sounds and Sweet Airs: The Forgotten Women of Classical Music*. London: Oneworld Publications, 2016.

<sup>765</sup> The Guardian. "Female composers largely ignored by concert line-ups." Accessed October 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2018/jun/13/female-composers-largely-ignored-by-concert-line-ups>

<sup>766</sup> NPR Classical. "The Sound of Silence: Female Composers at the Symphony." Last modified 19 June 2018. Accessed 19 June 2018. <https://www.npr.org/sections/deceptivecadence/2018/06/19/617136805/the-sound-of-silence-female-composers-at-the-symphony>



throughout the thesis, such as Helen Henschel and Annie Muirhead, who remain fairly anonymous, yet their presence at the Society suggests there are more interesting stories to be found among them. With specific regard to the ethical movement, there is scope for deeper examination of what role music played at other societies and how South Place compared to other societies nationally, as well as in Europe and particularly at the ethical societies in America, many of which still exist. The Conway Hall archive also still offers a wealth of opportunity to uncover new insights into the radical history of the South Place Chapel.

## Appendices

### **Appendix 1**

List of women who acted on the South Place Concert Committee between 1887 and 1927.

R. Abrahams (2), V. A. Alexander (2), Arklay (1), J. Arklay (5), Armfield (1), M. Barbere (3), B. Barralet (4), F. Becham (7), A. Bentley (6), E. Blackburn (8), M. Blake (5), H. Brown (11), E. Bunn (5), L. Burke (6), A. Carpenter (6), H. Catherall (8), D. Chappell (4), G. Davison (3), M. G. Downs (1), Dowse (5), H. M. Fairhall (19), P. Fenton (3), M. Gibson (1), H. R. Godfrey (1), E. Gould (9), G. Gowing (3), R. Halls (4), G. Halstead (1), L. C. Harris (2), F. M. Hawkins (5), Henman (1), E. Hicks (7), A. M. Howship (5), L. Isaacs (1), K. Jarret (8), M. Keatinge (2), H. Langelaan (4), L. Levison (1), G. Lewis (1), F. Lidstone (2), R. Lister (1), F. E. Marquardt (3), D. Meadmore (2), M. O'Brien (1), N. Parker (1), M. Pitts (3), A. Pugh (3), E. Pugh (2), I. Reynolds (1), R. Rosenberg (2), L. A. Salmon (2), R. Salmon (1), E. Shorter (2), L. M. Simes (7), A. Simmons (1), E. Simon (10), F. J. Simons (13), M. Skellorn (1), P. Snelling (11), Stanbury (1), M. Sumner (2), E. Swepstone (5), I. Sworn (1), F. A. Tait (8), M. Taylor (2), S. Toms (1), L. Usherwood (3), Westaway (1), W. Williams (1).<sup>767</sup>

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<sup>767</sup> Number in brackets ( ) = number of years on committee. Information from Meadmore, *The Story of a Thousand Concerts*, back cover.

## Appendix 2

Tables of compositions by women included in London concert series between 1900 and 1905.

South Place Sunday Popular Concerts.<sup>768</sup>

Year	Songs	Instrumental works
1900	14	2
1901	11	2
1902	9	0
1903	6	0
1904	8	0
1905	17	2
Total	65	6
Total combined	71	

Monday and Saturday Popular Concerts at St. James's Hall.<sup>769</sup>

Year	Songs	Instrumental works
1900	6	0
1901	3	0
1902	2	0
1903	1	0
1904	0	0
1905	N/A	N/A
Total	12	0
Total combined	12	

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<sup>768</sup> SPES: Concert programmes, 1900 – 1905.

<sup>769</sup> BL: Music Collections: d.480. Monday Popular Concerts – Saturday Popular Concerts. Programme and words, 1859 – 1904.

Richter Concerts at St. James's Hall.<sup>770</sup>

Year	Songs	Instrumental works
1900	0	0
1901	0	0
1902	0	0
1903	0	0
1904	0	0
1905	0	0
Total	0	0
Total combined	0	

Curtius Concerts at St. James's Hall, Bechstein Hall and Princes' Gallery.<sup>771</sup>

Year	Songs	Instrumental works
1900	6	0
1901	2	0
1902	0	0
1903	0	0
1904	0	0
1905	N/A	0
Total	8	0
Total combined	8	

Joachim Quartet at St. James Hall.<sup>772</sup>

Year	Songs	Instrumental works
1900	0	0
1901	0	0
1902	0	0
1903	0	0
1904	0	0
1905	0	0
Total	0	0
Total combined	0	

<sup>770</sup> BL: Music Collections: d.481. Richter Concerts held at St. James's Hall, 1879 – 1904.

<sup>771</sup> RCM: "London: Bechstein Hall (1901 – 1914)."

<sup>772</sup> RCM: "London: Bechstein Hall (1901 – 1914)."

St. James's Hall (other concerts).<sup>773</sup>

Year	Songs	Instrumental works
1900	1	0
1901	0	0
1902	0	0
1903	0	0
1904	0	4
1905	N/A	N/A
Total	1	4
Total combined	5	

Bechstein Hall.<sup>774</sup>

Year	Songs	Instrumental works
1900	N/A	N/A
1901	0	0
1902	4	0
1903	1	0
1904	4	1
1905	2	0
Total	11	1
Total combined	12	

Broadwood Concerts at St. James's Hall (seasons 1 & 2) and Aeolian Hall (the rest).<sup>775</sup>

Year	Songs	Instrumental works
1900	N/A	N/A
1901	N/A	N/A
1902	3	0
1903	0	0
1904	1	0
1905	1	0
Total	5	0
Total combined	5	

<sup>773</sup> RCM: "London: St. James's Hall (1895 – 1904)."

<sup>774</sup> RCM: "London: Bechstein Hall (1901 – 1914)."

<sup>775</sup> RCM: "London: St. James's Hall (1895 – 1904)."; RCM: "London: Aeolian Hall (1904 – 1944)."

Suburban Concerts (using Bartley's appendices).<sup>776</sup>

Suburban Concert Series	Number of songs and instrumental works in the series between 1888 and 1915
Hampstead	1
Woodford	1
Suburbiton	2
People's Concert Society (various venues)	0

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<sup>776</sup> Bartley, Alan. "Chamber concerts in suburban London, 1895 – 1915: aspects of repertoire, performance and reception" (PhD diss., Oxford Brookes University, 2004).

### Appendix 3

A collection of poems by Josephine Troup from the *South Place Magazine*.

#### *The Cruel Fangs of Pain*

The cruel fangs of pain are loosened now;  
Death came to her with his soft, cooling  
hand  
And laid it on her wan, spare cheek, and  
fanned  
To ease and rest her patient, tired brow.  
“We know not anything;” but she is gone;  
We think that if Death keep her in his  
claim  
She has no aching there; - no shame  
In looking back, no deed to wish undone.

We would not grieve and weep; for she  
Has passed  
Like falling blossom, still all pure and  
white;  
Unsoiled by contact with Earth’s bale  
and blight,  
But blooming, dying, sweetly to the last.

No dream of pure souls watching from afar  
May live with us, perchance, to soothe  
and cheer;  
But many a gentle thought of one so dear  
Shall draw us higher like a deathless star.

Does it not win us to a dumb remorse,  
That quiet vision of a life so fair,  
Of strength to do for others, smile, and  
bear –  
While self-love, chafing, frets our feeble  
course?

Her own bright soul made bright the world  
for her;  
No fond self-pity flickered at her heart;  
She lived outside herself, and with sweet  
art  
Could speak the word that lifts a load of  
care.

Her thoughts, in hours of pain, were fixed  
above  
The final failing of the transient breath.  
We ask the secret of her peaceful death  
And learn : they key of strength and peace  
Is Love.

*In Remembrance: Moncure D. Conway*

*“Write me as one that loved his fellow-men” ...*  
O thou who long hast toiled with tongue and pen  
To give thine inmost music to the world;  
And stood, with steady banner still unfurled,  
For freedom to *all* slaves of ancient bond;  
Thy victories shall be found in fields beyond  
Our purview, nor can our affection trace  
The limit of thine influence on the face  
Of thought. But O our Friend what shall we find  
As loftiest wreath about thy tomb to wind? –  
Shall not this thought be folded close with thee?  
*“As one that loved his fellow-men, write me.”*

A Poet-preacher, with the dower of wings,  
Who spoke for Truth through all his strenuous years;  
Who touched to glory life’s familiar things,  
And still! – a child whose smile lay close to tears.

His mind was like th’ exhaustless, moving sea,  
That must its dewy riches dissipate:  
Tideless and full his human sympathy  
That flowed to every shore of human fate.

A heart – so warmly knit, it chiefly prized  
Its store of human fellowship – which ‘neath  
The blows of Sorrow quailed, and agonised,  
And fought its lonely way from gates of Death.

Oh, for the solitary, left after joy  
Of love most perfect, most secure in bliss,  
To leap, *through love*, from grief to full employ –  
Could there be greater victory than this!

Death has no bar for winged Thought and Love,  
They soar beyond his silent, iron gate;  
And from that Darkness which no man may move,  
The charm we miss, shall Memory re-create.



### *Character*

At first a heap of strangely blended grain  
At random flung upon the shores of time  
It seems : which seed shall perish ere its prime,  
Which live, who knows, before the sun and rain  
Have kissed them into life, or hurricane  
And frost have done their worst? – Sublime,  
Mysterious laws by which we grow and climb,  
Oh solemn arbiters of joy and pain !  
So work in us that we may from the dust  
Of life's experience draw an inward trust;  
Down through the human soil in which we grow,  
May reach and clasp the eternal rocks below  
Of quietude and peace, and learn at length  
To grow through shadow and through storm to strength.

### *Spirit-touches*

Ah, who can stand alone? Or who may say:  
“Unaided, this or that will I achieve;  
I claim as mine whate'er my thoughts conceive  
Of worthier, purer life, or nobler fray”?  
For all our spirit-growth and manhood, yea  
To power to raise ourselves and rising, cleave  
To all the Good surrounding us and weave  
Its essence with our lives from day to day,  
Comes from the lifting up, the reaching forth,  
Of many a trembling hand invisible  
From heart and mind and soul, that seek to enfold  
And clasp a holier good, a higher worth.  
The body's hands we use; but who can tell  
What life, what powers, those unseen hands might hold?

*An Eastern Story*

A certain wise man, deeply versed  
In all the learning of the East,  
Grew tired in spirit, and athirst  
From life to be released.

So to Eliab, holy man  
Of God, he came: "Ah, give me, friend,  
The Herb of Death, that now the span  
Of my vain life may end".

Eliab gently answered: "Ere  
Thy soul may free itself indeed,  
This Herb of Healing thou must bear  
To seven men in need.

"When thou hast lightened each man's grief  
And brought him hope and joy again,  
Return; nor shalt thou seek relief  
At Allah's hands in vain."

The wise man sighed; but humbly said,  
"As Allah willeth, so is best";  
And with the healing herb he sped  
Away upon his quest.

And as he journeyed on, intent  
To serve the sorrowing in the land,  
On deeds of love and mercy bent,  
The herb bloomed in his hand;

And through his pulses shot a fire  
Of strength and hope and happiness;  
His heart leapt with the glad desire  
To live and serve and bless.

"Lord of all earthly woe and weal,  
Be this, life's flower, for ever mine!  
To love, to comfort, and to heal –  
Therein is life divine!"

## *Moods*

Oh! There are days

When as I walk the silver clouds laugh free,  
And all the tender blueness of the sky  
Knows my best meanings and smiles down on me,  
When bed and blossom breathe vitality,  
And all that lives and moves seems glad to be;  
When music lisps in every sparrow-cry,  
And human harmony is full and high;  
And every little child I meet moved by  
Some nameless bond of joy and sympathy,  
With angel eyes laughs up into my face.  
When all the world's alive with growth and hope,  
And every pulse throbs to the one refrain  
Of "Progress! progress!" and a gradual slope  
Leads all our faltering footsteps to the fane  
Of perfect manhood and unerring ways.

Oh! There are days

When life is old and stale, and skies are grey,  
And endless winds ahead the sorry road  
Which brings us all no higher. Then the play  
Of idlers saddens, and the fevered fray  
Which others wage seems all for self; the sway  
Of place and gold is tyrannous; the load  
Of toil and care the many bear abroad  
A weary slavery. What should be th'abode  
Of all divine impulse, the home and hoard  
Of the Ideal, choked with dust and clay,  
And man himself the temple of decay.  
Then do the painted curtains of the world  
Wear thin and bare, till through them can be seen  
The stabs of spite, the blows by hatred hurled,  
The struggles of the cruel and the mean.

Oh! on such days

Though dark the sky above, the heart within,  
Be ours the pow'r to brace and hold the will;  
The steady calm of self-control to win;  
Through tempests of despair and of chagrin  
To grasp the rudder of self-discipline.  
And may life's sun and shade, its good and ill  
Move us to more of tenderness, to skill  
Of human sympathy, bring the wish to fill  
The cup of water for all trembling hands, to till  
The barren plots of those who have scant share  
Of flowers, or of sunshine and sweet air.  
So shall it matter little if the sun

And when the changing moods of life are done,  
So may the quick outnumber all the dead.

*The Days That Are To Be.*

When Night is come, and from the crowded hall  
Of Day we turn aside and weary creep  
Beneath the portal dim and vast of Sleep,  
And closing tired eyelids we let fall  
The slackened reins of will, we see not all  
The veiled and floating forms that pass and sweep  
About the doorway in a silence deep.  
They are To-morrows, waiting for the call  
Of the inexorable hours; till they  
Are summoned, do they float in mystery there  
With faces hidden, be they grim or gay.  
Yet are they but the children of To-day:  
They catch its good, its glory, and are fair;  
Its weakness weaves already their despair.

*The Ideal*

Housed in a London slum, where a dull blight  
Of leaden smoke hangs brooding all the week  
Between the chimneys and pallid streak  
Of sky which marks the presence of the light,  
A little blind boy lives, whose lack of sight  
Has held him from the joys his comrades seek,  
And kept him delicate and small and weak.  
Yet, for his minister of all delight,  
He has – a common violin; and from its strings  
He draws rude music, and his soul finds wings.  
The fiddle is but poor, the music strays  
And squeaks; but he, he smiles and says,  
“My music’s not so very good, you see,  
But then I hear it as it ought to be.”

### *Emblem*

How exquisite is cloud, when flowing high  
Above the tufted pines, it curls and seethes  
About the rugged mountain-peaks, and sheathes  
In silver fleece their rents and scars, moved by  
The law that is sweet Nature's sympathy !  
    So exquisite is love, that gently breathes  
    Its tenderness about our human scars, and wreathes  
Its beauty round us in a close fidelity.  
So beautiful is love, that will not leave  
    The life that's flowerless to its lone despair,  
    But steals with healing touch and tender care  
To its cold side, and will not let it grieve;  
And asking no return, no answering glow,  
Would shield its loved one, and is happy so.

### *A Greeting*

(Written for the South London Ethical Society's Birthday Celebration.  
27 November 1898, the 6<sup>th</sup> birthday of the Society).

Friends, I would say a word of cheer and praise  
    For work that's still to do and work that's done.  
May this be one of many happy days,  
    The harbinger of many a gladness won!

The mists of creed are being blown aside,  
    But clear the stars of life shine out above,  
And through the riven storm-clouds still abide  
    The moral suns of Holiness and Love.

The secret of a good life is good will;  
    And every wish for better, nobler things  
That finds an echo in a friend is still  
    The stringer for the sympathy he brings.

Honest and earnest, firm in comradeship,  
    Proving how each may serve the common weal,  
I think your workers win the prize for "grip",  
    For mutual kindness, and untiring zeal.

This is your object – still to fan the flame  
    Of flickering moral impulse, draw it high,  
And, in the strength of one great conscious aim,  
    To help us do our best until we die;

To clear confusion from the mental view,  
To make us feel the worth of every day,  
To draw the best from others, to be true –  
Such are the ideals lighting up your way.

All honour then to those who've served our cause  
So actively, so faithfully, so well!  
And while their good success claims our applause,  
Long may their earnest spirit with us dwell!

### *Paraphrase of a Sicilian Legend*

When this our rounded world was first create,  
Its Maker, wearied with his labour great,  
Sent forth San Piètro on pinions fleet  
To see if soon the work would be complete.  
The saint, returning said: "Lord, there  
Are tears and sobs and moaning everywhere;  
The sighs that misery utters low  
Blend with the shriller cries of woe".

"Then is the world not finished," said the Lord,  
And went on working, while the saint adored.  
Three days went by. The great Creator then  
Sent forth his faithful messenger again  
To see if yet the world were done; anew  
The saint upon his earthward mission flew...  
Again before the Lord he stood,  
And said: "The world is filled with good."

"I found that everywhere is joy and mirth  
Among the men who tread thy shining earth:  
Laughter and merriment are reigning there,  
And every human lot is bright and fair."  
Then said the Lord: "My task is not yet o'er",  
And went on working as he had before...  
Once more San Piètro left the throne  
To see if yet the world were done.

And coming back, he said: "Some laugh with joy,  
And some for sorrow weep without alloy".  
"Now is my task completed," said the Lord,  
And ceased from working, while the saint adored.

So has it been, so must be, while the face  
Of Earth gives shelter to the human race.  
Our mortal nature cannot rest in bliss:

Who mounts the peaks of joy knows grief's abyss.  
None can save Man from sorrow or from pain,  
The life-companions of his heart and brain;  
But he who gives Man strength to strive with fate,  
And courage to endure, is truly great.

### *Heaven*

Oh human dream that floats above us still –  
Born of our yearning and feebleness,  
Of disappointments, agonies, that press  
With frosty touch on the aspiring will,  
Leaving its passion dead, its pulses chill –  
We chase thy visions dim, thy vague caress,  
From eyes no longer steeped in drowsiness,  
And face the palpitating *Now*: its ill  
Unmastered and its good unrealised  
Its misery unsoothed, its need despised.  
For here in human souls breathes heaven's air,  
And here in human souls drive blasts of hell.  
And ere the night shall whisper: "It is well";  
Our day its crown of loving work must bear.

### *To an Alpine Flower*

Sweet germ of life upon the cold grey rock,  
Thy home's the battlefield of raging storms;  
Where the red lightning darts its arrow-forms,  
And makes the sullen vapours crash, and lock  
Their sides and rack the sky – a smitten flock  
That fear-struck, demon-driven, onward swarms  
With maddened impulse to a thousand harms,  
And plunges to its doom with shock on shock.  
The humming-bee that haunts the valley-lands  
And courts the meadow-sweet, shall not woo thee;  
No soaring bird may share thy solitude:  
But all night long, with soft and silent hands,  
The snow of silver gauze shall weave thy hood,  
And o'er thee loom the wide sky, vast and free.

Oh lonely flower in the mountain snow  
For whom the face of nature has no smile  
Of tenderness and love; Oh small exile  
From values of bloom and song and life below,  
Where broods the summer, lingering, loth to go;  
Thy steadfast growth is striving to fulfil

The law of beauty with unswerving will.  
Calm, to its Ideal doth thy being flow,  
And, deep within thy heart, that mystic law  
Has fashioned root and stem and blossom fair.  
Before thy secret strength I kneel in awe,  
Sweet flower, blooming in the bitter air;  
For, held by inner forces from defeat,  
Thy life is perfect and thy task complete.



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