

# Musical Iowana: Iowa Women's Clubs and the Promotion of Iowa Composers

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ON SEPTEMBER 16, 1926, on the front page of the *Tama News Herald*, Faye Brice MacMartin, the program chair for the Tama Philharmonic Society, announced that she was looking forward to “an unusually successful season” of musical repertoire entirely by Iowa composers.<sup>1</sup> Not an orchestra, but a music club, the Tama Philharmonic was just one of the countless women's clubs that developed across America beginning in the Progressive Era, clubs that had a major impact on the country's musical life.<sup>2</sup> The society's program listed 9 meetings featuring 81 pieces by 12 composers who were born in or had substantial ties to Iowa.<sup>3</sup> Held in the little theater of the public library, the private performances focused on the music of one or two individuals. Each meeting began with a club member speaking about the featured artist. Twenty-eight women participated, primarily pianists and singers, with three violinists. The club's guest day on May 16, 1927, held at the Methodist Episcopal church's auditorium, featured pieces by multiple composers from the year's programming performed for the Cecilia Club of nearby Toledo and the public.<sup>4</sup>

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1. “Philharmonic Society Enters on a New Year,” *Tama News Herald*, 9/16/1926.

2. See Linda Whitesett, “‘The Most Potent Force’ in American Music: The Role of Women's Music Clubs in American Concert Life,” in *The Musical Woman*, vol. 3, ed. Judith Lang Zaimont et al. (Westport, CT, 1991), 663–81.

3. Floy Little Bartlett and Wayne Richards were represented by a single work.

4. “Philharmonic Society in Annual Guest Day Program Monday Night,” *Tama News Herald*, 5/12/1927; “Philharmonic Society's Guest Night Program,” *Tama*

The programming of the Tama Philharmonic may have been ambitious, but it was not unique. The following year, the Apollo Club of Greene organized a series featuring music by six of the composers heard in Tama. During the first half of the twentieth century, women's clubs across Iowa presented similar events, the bulk of which took place in the 1920s through the 1940s. Clubs' programs ranged from simply a member's brief talk about the state's composers, to a mixture of reports and performances, to full-fledged concerts. Beginning with examination of the Tama Philharmonic, this article explores the history of Iowa composers concerts and the role of women's organizations in their promotion. Concerts of Iowans' music stemmed from both the broader nationalistic aims of the women's club movement and Iowa club-women's aspirations to create a musical culture for their state.

FOUNDED IN EARLY 1919, the Tama Philharmonic Society included both amateur and professional musicians, many of whom were college educated.<sup>5</sup> Alice Brice (1880–1970) was the daughter of founding member Nettie Bracken, who was probably the first music teacher in town, traveling on foot to teach 40 students piano and voice. Brice served as the Methodist church's organist for 25 years and conducted the Philharmonic's 1923 performance of Handel's *Messiah* with over 40 participants for a standing-room-only audience.<sup>6</sup> Some members were school music teachers; others, such as Mrs. Ben Jones, came from musical families. Mae Beal's father played the piano and cornet in a local band. Connected socially, several of the women sang in the Methodist church's choir. Music teachers Vera Wonser Tims (1878–1965) and Ella Wonser Beal (1866–1940) were sisters, and five members had a sister-in-law in the group. Faye MacMartin (1887–1962) had attended Leander Clark College and studied music in Chicago. Although not a professional musician, MacMartin had published

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*News Herald*, 5/19/1927. The guests' concert differed from the published program, adding works by Mary Turner Salter, Frederic Knight Logan, Grace Clark DeGraff, and John Mokrejs.

5. Biographical information comes mainly from *Tama Centennial Book: 1862–1962* (n.p., 1962).

6. "Music Society Gives Oratorio," *Tama Herald*, 12/20/1923.

a diary of her two months touring Europe in 1910 that reveals her cultural sophistication and familiarity with classical composers such as Ludwig van Beethoven and Richard Wagner.<sup>7</sup>

Karen Blair, in her book, *The Torchbearers*, has described the opportunities clubs provided for women in the period from 1890 to 1930 through the artistic networks of two American organizations: the National Federation of Music Clubs and the General Federation of Women's Clubs. At its peak around 1930 the Music Federation had some 3,000 adult clubs with 300,000 members. The General Federation of Women's Clubs, with a large music division, was even farther reaching: in 1930 the Iowa Federation of Women's Clubs was made up of 900 member organizations in a state of only 2.5 million people. Women's clubs in the national federations served as venues for performers and composers; clubwomen organized ensembles, funded scholarships, and sponsored concerts. Music clubs were considered to be amateur organizations, as members performed for each other without pay. The performance levels varied widely, although some clubs had stringent audition requirements. Participants' activities were documented in yearly program booklets published for members, but, because of the performers' and the audiences' gender, concerts were publicized in newspapers' society columns rather than on entertainment pages. Clubs most often met privately, so they were sometimes viewed as exclusive in nature. However, large clubs often had dues-paying but nonperforming "associate" members, thus functioning like public concerts, and some urban clubs came to manage concert series by professional musicians. Women's clubs in small towns, like those in which many Iowa composers concerts took place, were frequently one of the few forces advancing the role of music in their communities. As in Tama, members were sometimes professional musicians or teachers, and clubs often served as important outlets for women whose access to the larger musical world was made more difficult by their gender.<sup>8</sup>

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7. *Tama Centennial Book*, 117; "Two Months Abroad: Notes from the Diary of Miss Fay Brice," Tama-Toledo Historical Society and Genealogical Library, Toledo, Iowa.

8. Karen J. Blair, *The Torchbearers: Women and Their Amateur Arts Associations in America, 1890-1930* (Bloomington, IN, 1994), 4-5, 52. See also Linda Whitesett,

Although the classical music world has long been dominated by the music of European composers, women's clubs were an important source of support for composers in the United States. Both the National Federation of Music Clubs and the General Federation of Women's Clubs promoted American music, particularly after the backlash against German music during World War I. As early as the 1890s, music critics explored issues of nationalism in American music. Intellectuals who criticized the influence of European culture in America often focused on orchestras, which were mostly led by German-born or German-trained conductors and dominated by German musicians. Anti-German sentiment peaked during World War I, and programming of German music decreased and was even briefly banned. Yet the organization of American composers concerts and the founding of manuscript societies in major cities in the late nineteenth century did not lead to the widespread acceptance of American music in professional concerts. Nonetheless, in women's clubs there was increased interest in American music after the war. Beginning in the 1920s, the General Federation of Women's Clubs adopted the slogan "Hear America First." According to Blair, both federations worked for a "national and official sanctioning for musical life" and sought to "encourage the productivity of American composers." Through their initiatives, clubs across the country took up the study and performance of American music.<sup>9</sup>

Throughout its eight-year existence, the Tama Philharmonic's programming frequently emphasized American music.<sup>10</sup> Its first three seasons featured American composers, as did that of 1925–26. The society, which does not appear to have been officially associated with either federation, described its nationalistic

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"Women as 'Keepers of Culture': Music Clubs, Community Concert Series and Symphony Orchestras," in *Cultivating Music in America: Women Patrons and Activists since 1860*, ed. Ralph Locke and Cyrilla Barr (Berkeley, CA, 1997), 65–86.

9. Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht, *Sound Diplomacy: Music and Emotions in Transatlantic Relations, 1850–1920* (Chicago, 2009), 154, 184; Barbara L. Tischler, "One Hundred Percent Americanism and Music in Boston during World War I," *American Music* 4 (1986), 166, 173; E. Douglas Bomberger, *A Tidal Wave of Encouragement: American Composers' Concerts in the Gilded Age* (Westport, CT, 2002), 146; Blair, *The Torchbearers*, 57.

10. Program books, December 1919–June 1927, Tama-Toledo Historical Society and Genealogical Library.

programming as “musical Americanization.” Anti-German sentiments were expressed at its 1920 guest day, when Mrs. J. L. Bracken gave a witty lecture taking “a few whacks at Germany, its rulers, its musicians, its maid servants and its man servants and its oxen.”<sup>11</sup> It seems likely that the group’s Iowa season was influenced by Faye MacMartin, who later became the first president of the Tama County Historical Society. However, MacMartin’s substantial programming for the Philharmonic Society was perhaps its undoing. After the 1926–27 season, meetings were suspended, and the group was not reconstituted.

The repertoire by Iowa composers that Tama’s clubwomen performed was typical of clubs’ programming; there were numerous piano solos and songs accompanied by piano, as well as an occasional piece for violin and piano or a vocal trio or sextet. The compositions were late Romantic in style, expressing extra-musical content related to religion, nature, and love. Some contained exoticist treatments of Asians or Native Americans, not uncommon in music of the period. A few large choral works were included: the secular cantata *The Last Tea of Tsuki* (1922), by Elias Blum (1881–1957), scored for women’s voices, was performed by other clubs as well and had been included in a repertoire list in the *Iowa Clubwoman* magazine in 1924.<sup>12</sup> Several of the songs were popular in their time, especially “By the Waters of Minnetonka” (1914) by Thurlow Lieurance (1878–1963), whose music had been the center of one of the society’s first programs in 1919. “Pale Moon,” by Frederic Knight Logan (1871–1928) of Oskaloosa, had been performed by the composer in 1921 on a joint Iowa-Illinois composers concert at the 12th biennial meeting of the National Federation of Music Clubs in the Tri-Cities.<sup>13</sup> It was recorded in an arrangement by renowned violinist Fritz Kreisler the following year and was performed by the Paul Whiteman Band at the famous 1924 New York concert “An Experiment in American Music” that first introduced George

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11. “Philharmonic Society Give Cantata,” *Tama Herald*, 6/10/1920. The December 1922 program lists a discussion on federating.

12. “Music Committee Report,” *Iowa Clubwoman* 5 (Sept.–Oct. 1924), 9.

13. Logan accepted the invitation in a letter to IFMC President Perle Schmidt. Logan to Schmidt, 3/9/1921, folder 9, box 14, Louis B. Schmidt (1879–1963) Papers, 1864–1973, Special Collections, Iowa State University Libraries (ISU), Ames.



*Frederic Knight Logan (1871–1928). Photo from State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City (SHSI-IC).*

Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*. It would later be recorded by Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra, and other vocalists. Some of the music programmed in Tama was by well-known songwriters Mary Turner Salter (1856–1938) and Jessie Gaynor (1863–1921), whose songs were already being heard in club circles nationally and had been performed at previous Philharmonic events.

The Tama Philharmonic Society may have acquired the scores for its season through the various efforts of Iowa's women's clubs or directly from the composers, many of whom were associated with nearby institutions of higher education.<sup>14</sup> Blum and Edward Scheve (1865–1924) taught at Grinnell College, Paul Stoye (1878–1971) and Henri B. Ruifrok (1882–1933) were at Drake University, and Horace Alden Miller (1872–1941) was a professor at Cornell

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14. Philharmonic members who also belonged to General Federation clubs might have had access to Iowa composers materials.

College. Ernest Leo was a music teacher based in Cedar Rapids for more than 50 years.<sup>15</sup> Cedar Rapids was also the original home of the Czech American composer John Mokrejs (1875–1968), although he moved to New York in 1905.<sup>16</sup> Des Moines soprano Grace Clark DeGraff (1878–1969) had performed around the state. Several of her compositions performed in Tama were not published, so it seems likely that the society acquired manuscript copies directly from her.<sup>17</sup> Although none of these composers are well known today, the selection of their music by the Tama Philharmonic represented an early incarnation of the important place that they came to hold for the state's clubwomen. Efforts by the Iowa Federation of Women's Clubs (IFWC) and the Iowa Federation of Music Clubs (IFMC) led to the regular performance of works by most of the composers across the state into the 1940s and beyond.

THE NOTION of Iowa composers concerts originated with the Society of Music Teachers (later the Iowa Music Teachers Association). Founded in 1885, the group had multiple presidents who were composers, including Blum, Ruifrok, Leo, and others; Virginia Knight Logan, lyricist for her son Frederic, served as treasurer in 1896. Between 1888 and 1895 composers concerts were a semiregular feature of the organization's yearly meetings, perhaps inspired by the Music Teachers National Association, which sponsored American composers concerts beginning in 1884; the program for the 1901 meeting featured 17 works by 6 Iowa composers.<sup>18</sup>

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15. Robert Russell Bruner, "A History of Music in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Before 1900" (PhD diss., State University of Iowa, 1964), 81–82, 193. Leo's works were incorrectly attributed to his son Ralph.

16. Joan Trapp Fish, "John Mokrejs, Iowa Pedagogue, Composer, and Pianist" (DMA essay, University of Iowa, 1978), 7–8. After moving to New York, Mokrejs made summer visits to Iowa.

17. DeGraff's manuscripts (at the Des Moines Public Library) include unpublished compositions heard at Tama: *Awake Ye Flowers*, *The Dance of Pierrot*, *A Reverie*, and "Argentinian Street Song," from the operetta *The Masked Singer*, listed as "Brazilian Street Song" with its original title inked over.

18. Marvin S. Thostenson, *A History of the First Century of the Iowa Music Teachers Association, 1885–1895* (n.p., 1985); Bomberger, *A Tidal Wave of Encouragement*, xiii. Composers concerts took place in 1888, 1890, 1901, 1903, 1916, 1927, and 1929.



*Iowa Federation of Music Clubs, third biennial meeting, Grinnell College, 1920, including incoming president Perle Schmidt and composer Edward Scheve (front row, fifth and second from the right, respectively). Photo courtesy Special Collections and University Archives, Iowa State University Libraries, Ames.*

There was significant overlap between the membership of the Society of Music Teachers and the Iowa Federation of Music Clubs, which was organized in 1916 with 13 clubs and grew to 94 clubs by 1930. Unlike the General Federation of Women's Clubs, the National Federation of Music Clubs contained some clubs with male members, but the IFMC soon became female-dominated. Federation members featured concerts of music by Iowa composers at their first state meeting in Davenport in 1916 and again in 1921 and 1923. The group held joint annual meetings with the Iowa Music Teachers Association for three consecutive years beginning with the 1926 meeting in Des Moines. The 1927 meeting in Ames, with 1,500 attendees, featured a concert of compositions by Stoye, DeGraff, and Philip Greeley Clapp, a State University of Iowa professor. The Music Teachers Association fell temporarily dormant beginning in 1934, but it had by then helped to establish the precedent for Iowa composers concerts by the IFMC.<sup>19</sup>

19. *Musical Iowa, 1838–1938: A Century of Music in Iowa* (n.p., 1938), 77; Thostenson, *First Century of the Iowa Music Teachers Association*, 32–33, 38–39.



Press reports surrounding early concerts of music by Iowa composers reflected the aspiration of Progressive Era women's clubs and others across the state to create a culture of high art. An article about the Music Teachers conference in Des Moines in 1905 indicated that "it may surprise some of our eastern friends to learn that busy Iowa . . . has found time to devote to the beautiful art. And if she has as yet developed no Beethoven or Mozart, she has a number of composers of undoubted talent and great promise."<sup>20</sup> The Tri-Cities Symphony was founded in 1916 and the Cedar Rapids Symphony in 1921, the same year the Iowa legislature passed a law allowing towns to support municipal bands with local taxes. At the same time, Iowa's largely agrarian reputation, which was at the center of the regionalist artistic and intellectual movement of the pre-World War II period, generated a defensive tone when it came to the state's musical efforts.<sup>21</sup> Clubwoman Daisy Hathorn evoked pioneer imagery, describing westward expansion as generating the fruits of civilization behind it: "Every time the Frontier was moved westward, the sediment of culture was left behind and if that be true, surely we are catching up in a musical way."<sup>22</sup>

Iowa's growing artistic culture was regularly held up in opposition to its farm products. The *Iowa Postal Card* of Fayette pointed out that "Iowans write books, paint pictures, compose musical scores, do a hundred and one things that have nothing to do with corn and corn fed hogs." However, in a 1922 critique of Iowans' belief in the state's cultural life, Johan Smertenko complained, "Seldom has a people been less interested in self-expression and more concerned with hog nutrition." Smertenko's comments appeared in *The Nation*, a journal whose influential editor, Carl Van Doren, spearheaded a rejection of small-town provincialism and hailed writers who rejected midwestern values. Smertenko pointedly parodied Iowans' self-image: "There are women's clubs that study lite'ture, poetry, music, and furniture,

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20. "Iowa News and Notes," *Burlington Hawk-Eye*, 1/7/1905.

21. E. Bradford Burns, *Kinship with the Land: Regionalist Thought in Iowa, 1894-1942* (Iowa City, 1996), x.

22. Mrs. William Hathorn, "Music Division," *Year Book of the Iowa Federation of Women's Clubs, 1933-34*, 273. Hathorn cites James Truslow Adams.

and all that sort of stuff. . . . There's no State West of the Mississippi that can show more culture than we've got — that's a fact!"<sup>23</sup>

Smertenko's misogynistic attitude that women's clubs' efforts were merely "the social activities of a few liberated housewives" led to an angry response in *Iowa Magazine* by IFMC president Perle Schmidt. Schmidt endeavored to break down the stereotypical dichotomy that portrayed urban life as sophisticated and rural regions as a cultural wasteland. She expressed a Romantic belief that nature — specifically nature in Iowa — could motivate the creation of compositions, pointing to Bohemian composer Antonín Dvořák's inspiration from his brief visit to Winneshiek County as proof that the state could produce musical culture. She concluded, "Then why should not the Iowa Federation of Music Clubs see visions and dreams of Iowa's place in the musical world?" Other writers envisioned Iowa as the potential source of an American school of composition: "Who knows, perhaps the father and founder of the American school of music may find in her fields and forests, her prairies and bottoms, her hills and lakes and rivers, the inspiration to create something lasting and original and distinctly American."<sup>24</sup>

WOMEN'S CLUBS' EMPHASIS on Iowa's music was part of the statewide incarnation of a national push from both the General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC) and the National Federation of Music Clubs to promote American music. A nationalistic spirit shaped the agendas of both groups, which worked to enhance communities' musical life with the objective of creating a culture on par with the European music that dominated American concerts. Mrs. Frank Fowler's talk to the Tama Philharmonic in May 1919 titled "Why Do Eminent Men and Women in Many Walks of Life Earnestly Urge Music as a National Need?" exem-

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23. "Iowa's Blue Book," *Iowa Postal Card*, 1/25/1906; Johan J. Smertenko, "Iowa: A Mortgaged Eldorado," *The Nation*, 12/13/1922, 660, 658; Jon K. Lauck, *From Warm Center to Ragged Edge: The Erosion of Midwestern Literary and Historical Regionalism, 1920–1965* (Iowa City, 2017), 11–12.

24. Perle Schmidt, "Iowa Composers of Music," *Iowa Magazine*, December 1923, 510, 516; Mrs. Louis B. Schmidt, "How They Handle the Club Situation in Iowa," *The Etude* 40 (March 1922), 208; "Iowa News and Notes," *Burlington Hawk-Eye*, 1/7/1905.

plified this goal. In her 1926 report for the Music Division of the Iowa Federation of Women's Clubs, Isabelle Hofman complained, "Today every civilized country in the world, except our own, recognizes music as a necessary item of support, like education, health, the judiciary, defense." Women were considered to be ideally suited for transforming this attitude. In a speech to women's clubs, State University of Iowa president Thomas Macbride claimed that by "so purifying public taste, they . . . create an atmosphere in which culture and refinement have naturally their place." GFWC president Alice Ames Winter emphasized that clubwomen should work to help all Americans appreciate high art. "America has the opportunity to become the great musical nation of the world, IF music becomes a part of our lives, not the possession of the high-brow few."<sup>25</sup>

In line with these goals, the IFWC, following the national organization, actively promoted music to its members. By 1919, the IFWC's Music Division had a section devoted to composition. It exhorted clubs to at least open meetings with music and circulated programs on musical topics, both those of the GFWC and ones of its own making, to the state's clubs. The first issue of *The Iowa Clubwoman*, published in 1917, reported the national music chair's suggestion that GFWC members study American music by utilizing local culture. "Use the music legends, folk lore and history of your own state wherever possible."<sup>26</sup> Thus, clubs' approach to what constituted American music resembled the goals of 1930s regionalist artists and their "desire to find authentic American subject-matter" by concentrating on local topics.<sup>27</sup>

Descriptions of club programs in Iowa newspapers suggest that many shaped their activities around the GFWC's American music offerings. National chair Anna Shaw Faulkner Oberndor-

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25. Mrs. Frank Hofman, "Report of the Music Division," *Iowa Federation of Women's Clubs 1925-26 Yearbook*, 270; Thomas H. Macbride, *Culture and Women's Clubs: An Address Before the Minnesota Federation of Women's Clubs, Minneapolis, February, 12, 1916*, University of Iowa Extension Bulletin, 1st ser., no. 1, no. 20 (Iowa City, 1916), 25; Alice Ames Winter, *The Business of Being a Club Woman* (New York, 1925), 132.

26. Quoted in Anna Gertrude Childs, "Music Committee," *Iowa Clubwoman* 1 (March 1917), 7.

27. Annie Dell'Aria, "Regionalism (ii)," 7/25/2013 version, in *Grove Art Online*, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gao/9781884446054.article.T071153>.

fer's oft-reprinted 1913 study guide stressed music's "national" character, and at the 1922 meeting in Chautauqua, New York, she organized a series of "all-American" musicales.<sup>28</sup> The program on Native American music she arranged was given by Oskaloosa-born composer Thurlow Lieurance and his wife.<sup>29</sup> The full season of American programs circulated by the GFWC in the mid-1920s reflected many of the topics of Oberndorfer's original musicales: Lieurance's "Indian music," as well as "Negro music," "music in Colonial days," "pioneer music," "the Civil War period," and women composers.<sup>30</sup> The GFWC offered free materials for clubs in towns of under 5,000 with the provision that the sheet music, piano rolls, and recordings be returned.<sup>31</sup> The IFWC helped to publicize these programs along with its own Iowa-related materials to its members.

National organizations' programs presented Native American culture as one of the roots of American music. Thus, "Indianist" compositions that evoked a fictionalized indigenous culture or quoted Native American melodies, produced in large numbers by American composers in the early twentieth century, became staples of Iowa women's club programming. However, the compositions intended to evoke indigenous music were actually written in a European style, including two of the most popular works by Iowans: Logan's "Pale Moon" (named for an "Indian maiden") and Lieurance's "Waters of Minnetonka," supposedly based on a Native melody.<sup>32</sup> Although Lieurance had moved to Kansas in 1901, he was particularly well known in Iowa from his appearances on the Chautauqua and lyceum circuits in the teens

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28. Anne Shaw Faulkner [Oberndorfer], *What We Hear in Music* (Camden, NJ, 1913), 5.

29. "American Music Stressed," *Iowa Clubwoman* 2 (July–August 1922), 8.

30. Mrs. Frank Hofman, "Report of the Music Division," *Iowa Federation of Women's Clubs 1925–26 Yearbook*, 268. Oberndorfer published related articles in *Better Homes and Gardens*. Terese M. Volk, "Anne Shaw Faulkner Oberndorfer (1877–1948): Music Educator for the Homemakers of America," *Journal of Historical Research in Music Education* 29 (October 2007), 33–35.

31. "'Hearing America' Programs Ready; \$500 Prizes Offered," *General Federation Clubwoman* 5, no. 6 (1924), 6.

32. Lieurance's song was also recorded as a foxtrot by the Paul Whiteman Band. National Jukebox, Library of Congress, <http://www.loc.gov/jukebox/recordings/detail/id/9925>.

and twenties, performing his own arrangements of Native American music.<sup>33</sup> IFWC publications sometimes suggested that the preservation of Iowa's "folk music" required consideration of the Meskwaki, although the Meskwaki were portrayed as part of the state's historic origins rather than as a living culture. A 1925 plan to collect Meskwaki melodies and "have them put into permanent form as Iowa's contribution to our American folklore" did not materialize, so actual indigenous music had no discernable impact on club programs.<sup>34</sup>

The Tama Philharmonic Society programmed somewhat more Indianist music than other Iowa clubs, in part because of its proximity to the Meskwaki settlement. Like many of the period, members of the society believed that music by "Indians and Negroes" constituted America's "real folk songs."<sup>35</sup> The society frequently presented Indianist compositions, as it did at the final concert of the society's first season in 1919 and on its June 1921 guest day, which featured Charles Wakefield Cadman's Indianist opera *Shanewis* (1918). In May 1923 the society staged an outdoor production of Chicago composer William Lester's operetta, *Se-a-wan-a*, in costume.<sup>36</sup> Not only did the Tama Philharmonic's Iowa season include four songs by Lieurance, but it also featured Horace Alden Miller's *Indian Themes Cycle* for piano and two short piano compositions by John Mokrejs that directly reference the Meskwaki, *Old Chief Metawaqua* and *From a Tama Pow-Wow*.<sup>37</sup> Technically uncomplicated and designed for children, Mokrejs's

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33. Lieurance was familiar with indigenous music and made field recordings at the Crow reservation in Montana. Michael Pisani, *Imagining Native America in Music* (New Haven, CT, 2005), 268–71; Paige Lush, *Music in the Chautauqua Movement, From 1874 to the 1930s* (Jefferson, NC, 2013), 167–68.

34. Mrs. Frank Hofman, "Report of the Music Division," *Iowa Federation of Women's Clubs 1925–26 Yearbook*, 268.

35. "Philharmonic Society Give Cantata," *Tama Herald*, 6/10/1920.

36. "Seawana Pleases a Large Audience: Many Hear and Enjoy Tuneful Production by the Philharmonic Society," *Tama Herald*, 5/24/1923. See also Gerald McBurney, "A Composer in the Prairies: William Lester and His Music," *Tempo* 62 (October 2008), 35–48.

37. John Mokrejs, "Old Chief Metawaqua, a Sac and Fox," in *Musical Sketches: Six Easy Pieces for the Piano* (1908; reprint ed., Cedar Rapids, 1936); idem, *From a Tama Pow-Wow*, op. 35, no. 2 (Chicago, 1919), available in Rita Benton Music Library, University of Iowa, Iowa City.

compositions have not been located on any other Iowa women's club programs, so were probably chosen because of their local association. The extensive Indianist programming may have been influenced by Faye MacMartin; in the 1940s she became the state chair of the American Indian Committee for the Daughters of the American Revolution and penned publications about Native Americans.<sup>38</sup>

IFWC composition chairs in the 1920s and 1930s indicated that they remained active in supplying all kinds of American music materials to clubs for their monthly (or sometimes bi-monthly) programs, including items from their personal collections. Beginning in the early 1920s Iowa groups relied on the "traveling library" — library extension services — to provide books and music to rural areas.<sup>39</sup> However, the state federation's focus was more on Iowa's music than on American music as a whole. Chairs kept a list of Iowa musicians and composers on file, which was reportedly already "worn" from circulation by 1924. Chair Isabelle Hofman requested that in order to bring the list of composers up to date, "any club woman who knows the name of an Iowan who can be included in this roster" should send their name to the committee.<sup>40</sup>

In the fall of 1925 Hofman announced that the Iowa Artists and Composers Loan Program had debuted at a club meeting in Boone. It was subsequently used in Greene, Newell, Corydon, and Ottumwa. Designed to facilitate local presentations, the program was made up of a paper on Iowa music, seven records, sheet music, and portraits that could be projected by a stereopticon. By 1928, the federation could report that its program had been used by about 30 clubs. The materials proved so popular that a duplicate set of the sheet music had to be assembled, and "the working out if its routing" took on "something of the character of a Chinese puzzle."

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38. "Faye MacMartin, Daughter of Tama Pioneers Dead," May 1962, Obituary Book, Tama-Toledo Historical Society and Genealogical Library. MacMartin published *The Sac and Fox Indians* (Tama, 1946). Member Mrs. R. W. Smith was married to the minister serving the Meskwaki settlement mission.

39. Anna Gertrude Childs, "Report of Music Committee," *Iowa Federation of Women's Clubs 1923–1924 Yearbook*, 207.

40. Isabelle M. Hofman, "Music Division of Fine Arts Department," *Iowa Clubwoman* 6 (November–December 1925), 11.



*Paul Stoye (1878–1971). Photo from a publicity flyer in Perle Schmidt files, SHSI-IC.*

By 1932, the IFWC offered eight programs on Iowa composers, including Logan, Lieurance, and Salter, which had been used by 70 towns. Two years later it was reported that five copies of the Iowa composers material had been circulating for five years.<sup>41</sup>

Some club members reported on their firsthand experience with Iowa composers from having attended the institutions at which they taught; others wrote directly to composers for additional information. In preparation for their program, members of Spencer's Clef Club requested that Paul Stoye play his own pieces during a radio broadcast.<sup>42</sup> Multiple clubs were named in

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41. Ibid.; Mrs. Frank Hofman, "Report of the Music Division," *Iowa Federation of Women's Clubs 1925–26 Yearbook*, 269–70; Isabel F. [sic] Hofman, "Division of Music," *Iowa Federation of Women's Clubs 1927–28 Yearbook*, 264; Mrs. William Hathorn, "Music Division," *Iowa Federation of Women's Clubs 1933–34 Yearbook*, 273.

42. "Clef Club Present Program of Iowa Composers at Monday Meeting," *Spencer News Herald*, 2/9/1934.

honor of Iowa composers, including Stoye, Alexander Rommel, Frank Nagel, and Grace Clark DeGraff (Des Moines's "G.C.D." Harmony Music Club). Some clubs added music composed by one of their members or by another local composer to their programs. Most clubs, though, relied on the materials sent out by the state organizations. The Salem Women's Club, for example, played Iowans' compositions on a Victrola at its 1928 meeting.<sup>43</sup>

Iowa clubwomen's efforts were part of nationwide initiatives by the GFWC and the NFMFC and were thus not unlike those in other states. Programs about state composers had been suggested in Alice Hazen Cass's book, *Practical Programs for Women's Clubs*, in 1915.<sup>44</sup> In the teens, women's clubs federations in Maine and Texas took interest in their state's composers. As early as 1908, the Illinois Federation of Women's Clubs began compiling a list of its state's composers, publishing a booklet to circulate in 1912 and enlarging it in 1916. Illinois's Music Committee encouraged clubs to have an annual composers program (as the Woman's Musical Club in Chicago did), and both the 1914 and 1920 state meetings featured Illinois composers. The Michigan State Federation of Women's Clubs circulated a lecture on its state's composers, and the Oregon Federation of Women's Clubs encouraged music committees to send lists of the five best compositions by composers of their town to the state chair. Nonetheless, Iowa clubwomen's large-scale circulation of both information and scores was recognized as far reaching. In 1926 GFWC Music Chair Oberndorfer stated that Iowa was the only state with a formal loan program. In 1937 Mrs. Ralph E. Good, NFMFC American music division chair, praised Iowa's "exceptional record for promoting the work of its own composers" through the 600 compositions placed in the state traveling library. A decade later one report commended the way "music by Iowa composers had been made available to rural Iowa communities."<sup>45</sup>

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43. "Salem Women's Club Enjoys Interesting Program Week Ago," *Fort Madison Evening Democrat*, 5/17/1928.

44. Alice Hazen Cass, *Practical Programs for Women's Clubs* (Chicago, 1915), 79.

45. Stella L. Christian, *The History of the Texas Federation of Women's Clubs* [Houston, 1919], 161, 191; Maine Federation of Women's Clubs, *Yearbook, 1914-15*, 43; Maude G. Palmer, *The History of the Illinois Federation of Women's Clubs, 1894-*





*Perle Schmidt (1881–1957). Photo courtesy Special Collections and University Archives, Iowa State University Libraries, Ames.*

SINGER, songwriter, and author Perle Schmidt (1881–1957) was one of the most influential IFMC members in the promotion of Iowa composers. A member of the Faculty Women's Club in Ames, she followed her term as IFMC president (1921–1923) by taking on the state clubs' composition activities in 1925, after already having published articles about Dvořák and Iowa composers in *Iowa Magazine*. Schmidt saw her task not only as providing club programs but also as undertaking research into Iowa's artistic past. She began publicizing the three-month residence in 1893 of the internationally renowned Dvořák, and on September 28,

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1928 ([Chicago], 1928), 59, 79, 96; Oregon Federation of Women's Clubs, *Yearbook* (1915–16), 46; "Division of Music," *Iowa Federation News* (March–April 1926), 16; "Praises Iowa's Support of Its Music Composers," *Waterloo Daily Courier*, 4/27/1937; "Music Report Praises Iowa Traveling Library," *Carroll Times Herald*, 4/24/1947.

1925, she helped dedicate a monument to the composer in a park in Spillville, the village where he had resided. Schmidt worked to perpetuate the idea that both Dvořák's well-known *Humoresque* (op. 101, no. 7) and the *Largo* from his Ninth Symphony, "From the New World," originated in Iowa, although the former was actually composed the following year and the latter was largely completed before he arrived in the state. Nonetheless, her efforts helped establish Dvořák, who returned to Prague in 1895, as sufficiently "Iowan" to be frequently included on club programs, and in 1945 the Iowa Senate passed a bill to make the *Largo* the state instrumental music, though it was never brought up in the House.<sup>46</sup>

Schmidt continued previous efforts to compile lists of the state's composers. In 1924, while she chaired the Iowa Conservation Association's Historical Committee, it sent out a survey, the results of which allowed her to announce that since 1885, 235 Iowans by birth or residence had been or were currently composers. Schmidt reported on her research at the joint meeting of the IFMC and IMTA in 1926, and the *Des Moines Register* published her list of names. The IFMC's work to generate a list of the state's composers was part of ongoing efforts by the National Federation of Music Clubs to identify American composers. In 1937 National Music Research Chair Alethea Bonner provided instructions to state leaders for cataloging regional composers and praised them for "bringing to light rare music treasures."<sup>47</sup>

Schmidt remained active in her role until 1931, when she was reported as retiring not as composition chair but as "historian" for the IFMC. Her collection of 120 compositions was on display at the 1931 Cedar Rapids meeting.<sup>48</sup> She continued to write about

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46. "Dvorak's Largo Chosen for State Instrumental," *Fayette County Leader*, 4/12/1945. See also Michael Beckerman, *New Worlds of Dvořák: Searching in America for the Composer's Inner Life* (New York, 2003), 160–63.

47. Iowa Conservation Association vertical file, State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City (SHSI-IC); "156 Composers Boast of Iowa as Their Home," *Des Moines Register*, 3/10/1926; "List Reveals 156 Recognized Iowa Musicians," *Des Moines Register*, 4/4/1926; Alethea M. Bonner to State Research Chairmen, National Federation of Music Clubs, 1/4/1937, folder 8, box 2, Agnes V. Flannery Papers, ca. 1920s–1950s, State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines.

48. "Iowa Federation of Music Clubs Will Hold Biennial Meeting in Cedar Rapids April 27–29," *Ames Daily Tribune-Times*, 4/25/1931.

Iowa's music, and reported that she had spoken before clubs at Conrad, Boone, Ogden, Waterloo, Des Moines, and Nevada; she spoke at her own club in Ames three times and appeared on radio station WOI on four occasions.<sup>49</sup> Club members in Montour, Nashua, and Eagle Grove relied on Schmidt's paper on Iowa composers for presentations; others wrote to her about composers in their town to add to her list. When Maude Fleetwood Johnson became program chair for Sioux City's Schubert Club, she wrote to Schmidt for the composers list.<sup>50</sup> Schmidt sometimes corresponded with the composers themselves, including Coe College faculty member Louise Crawford (1890–1973). Selections by women were not unusual on regular club programs, as many female composers had national reputations and their songs and piano works were frequently programmed.<sup>51</sup> However, Crawford's selection for the prestigious MacDowell Colony in New Hampshire made her distinctive. Schmidt believed her to be "the woman who has brought to Iowa her greatest honor," second only to Logan, whose "Pale Moon" and "Missouri Waltz" were widely known.<sup>52</sup>

Schmidt's focus on recognition of the state's musical history and culture was in keeping with similar activities by other Iowa clubwomen during the 1920s and '30s that worked to enhance their sense of state identity. For example, beginning in 1925, the IFWC, in cooperation with the State Historical Society of Iowa, established a history and landmarks committee to promote Iowa History Week. In 1937 *The Iowa Clubwoman*, the magazine of the IFWC, published lengthy lists of works by Iowa authors: poems, novels, plays, biographies, books by Iowa historians, and more.<sup>53</sup>

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49. Activities of Mrs. Louis B. Schmidt [typed], folder 1, Schmidt files, SHSI-IC. For an example of her own writing, see "His Quiet Iowa Home Inspired the Music of Frederic Knight Logan," *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 10/14/1934.

50. Johnson to Schmidt, folder 2, box 16, Schmidt Papers, ISU.

51. On the 19,000 women's songs during this period, see Christopher Reynolds, "Documenting the Zenith of Women Song Composers: A Database of Songs Published in the United States and the British Commonwealth, ca. 1890–1930," [Music Library Association] *Notes* 69 (June 2013), 671–87.

52. Schmidt to John E. Briggs, 2/10/[1930], folder 1, Schmidt files, SHSI-IC. Schmidt's article, "The Federated Music Club," appeared in the *Palimpsest* 11 (1930), 97–106.

53. *Iowa Clubwoman* 19 (May–June 1937), 15.

Iowa's music was thus part of clubwomen's education about their state, and some club programs that did not feature musical performances nonetheless included informational reports about Iowa's musical life. The 1926 "Iowa Musicians" program for the Nevada Women's Club was just one facet of a year-long study of the history, geography, and culture of the state. In 1938 the home and garden department of Morning Sun's Sorosis Club featured Mrs. C. W. Butler's talk on state composers as part of a program that also covered Iowa's early history, development of education, and authors and poetry; it concluded with the group singing the "Corn Song" and "Iowa, Beautiful Land."<sup>54</sup>

Schmidt's approach to listing Iowa composers was comprehensive; she did not judge them on their origins or the quality of their work or limit her list to a "chosen few." Iowans who, like herself, had written brief songs were as worth noting as professional composers who produced large-scale classical works, in spite of the national federation's emphasis on high-art music. One problem for Schmidt and other clubwomen was the question of who legitimately counted as an Iowan. Schmidt divided Iowans into categories by virtue of birth, such as Lieurance, or by virtue of residence, such as Stoye, who was originally German.<sup>55</sup> Given that a large number of professional musicians working in America were European immigrants, their contributions were not only an issue for Schmidt and the national federation, but sometimes for club members as well. In 1928 Mrs. E. E. Simpson of Nashua wrote to Schmidt for help with a paper titled "What Have Foreigners Given to Iowa in Music?"<sup>56</sup> When the IFMC published a book, *Musical Iowana*, in 1938, composers' biographies were organized by categories: "native born," "Iowa-adopted, American born," and "Iowa-adopted, foreign-born."

In addition, Schmidt's writings adopted successful musicians who had visited the state as honorary Iowans, such as Dvořák or

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54. Program book, Nevada Woman's Club, 1925-1926, folder 1, Schmidt files, SHSI-IC; "Home and Garden Dept. of Sorosis," *Morning Sun News Herald*, 4/7/1938.

55. Mrs. Louis B. Schmidt, "Iowa Composers of Music," typed manuscript, 3, folder 5, box 15, Schmidt Papers, ISU; Mrs. Louis Bernard Schmidt, "Iowa Composers of Music," *Midland Schools*, February 1928, 198.

56. Simpson to Schmidt, 9/25/1928, folder 1, Schmidt files, SHSI-IC.

the wildly popular songwriter Carrie Jacobs-Bond, whom Schmidt believed had lived in Bloomfield and Marshalltown and who had sold millions of copies of her original sheet music. Jacobs-Bond's songs, in particular "A Perfect Day," were frequently featured on Iowa composers programs before 1935, and Schmidt incorrectly claimed that, like Dvořák's *Humoresque*, the song had been written in Iowa.<sup>57</sup> The songs of Jessie Gaynor, far less famous than Jacobs-Bond's but well known outside of the state, were often programmed in Iowa even though she had lived in Iowa City for only two years.<sup>58</sup> That composers who had moved on after their Iowa sojourn might not consider themselves Iowans did not occur to Schmidt, who complained about a composer who didn't want to be labeled as a native, writing, "Well nothing much could be done about it. . . . Nobody can change a birthplace. But they can make themselves appear ridiculous."<sup>59</sup> Schmidt's publications assured readers that Iowans had established a firm musical foundation for their state. When renowned conductor Walter Damrosch told listeners to his radio broadcast that he received the most mail from Iowa and believed it to be the "most musical state," Schmidt was quick to alert the local press.<sup>60</sup>

CLUBWOMEN'S ongoing engagement with the music of Iowa composers led to larger initiatives in the 1930s: radio broadcasts, performances at the Iowa State Fair, and the publication of the book *Musical Iowana*. As early as 1925 and 1926, the Des Moines Treble Clef Club broadcast music by commonly programmed Iowa composers. During American music week in 1930, Ames Faculty Women's Club musicians performed on WOI, accompanied by Schmidt's commentary. A typical program included Stoye's piano compositions, followed by "Pale Moon," "By the Waters of Minnetonka," and Jacobs-Bond's "I Love You Truly,"

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57. "Carrie Jacobs Bond Gave Her First College Concert at I. S.," *Ames Daily Tribune*, 1/2/1947.

58. *Musical Iowana*, 124.

59. Schmidt, "Iowa Composers of Music," typed manuscript, 3. Schmidt is probably referring to Mary Turner Salter, who was born in Peoria but spent her childhood in Burlington.

60. "Iowa Most Musical State Says Damrosch," *Ames Daily Tribune and Ames Evening Times*, 2/11/1928.

and closed with Dvořák's *Largo* and *Humoresque*, both played on violin.<sup>61</sup> That these works had come to represent the state is demonstrated by the 1932 Parade of the States program celebrating Iowa, a national broadcast arranged in part by the current IFMC president, which also included a movement of Dvořák's "New World" Symphony and "Pale Moon" arranged for orchestra.<sup>62</sup>

In 1932, under the direction of then president Helen Ristvedt, the IFMC presented six days of concerts of Iowa composers at the Iowa State Fair as part of the programming at the Women's and Children's Building. Six clubs from Des Moines, Story City, Indianola, and Ames performed music by the composers most often heard on state programs: Stoye, DeGraff, Logan, Lieurance, Blum, Mokrejs, Ruifrok, Crawford, Dvořák, and others, a total of 18 in all. The IFMC repeated the daily "Iowa music festival" concerts in 1933. Its radio series, "Musical Iowana," was created to broadcast performances similar to those held at the fair. The program was to be the state's version of the national federation's weekly show promoting American music, "Musical Americana," heard on the Columbia Broadcasting System. President Ristvedt hoped that all state clubs would eventually appear on the program. Perhaps because she urged them to prepare Iowans' music, the number of composers programs by state clubs increased in 1932 and 1933. The longest-running broadcast to promote Iowa composers was organized by Oma Moffett Shaw (1904–2004) of Iowa City, who hosted a radio show on WOI from 1939 to 1951 in her capacity as the chair of the Member State Radio Program Committee for the Daughters of the American Revolution. The program was discontinued after she no longer chaired the committee, but the 1951 renaming of the committee—to Advancement of American Music and Radio—demonstrates that its goals for music were similarly nationalistic to those of the GFWC and NFMC.<sup>63</sup>

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61. "A. F. Tienan Rites Are Held Saturday," *Ames Daily Tribune*, 5/5/1930.

62. "National Tribute to the State of Iowa," *Terril Record*, 9/1/1932.

63. "Iowa Federation of Music Clubs Plans State Fair Program," *Ottumwa Daily Courier*, 8/16/1932; "Musical Iowana Programs," *Musical Notes* 3 (10/1/1932), 8, folder 2, box 7, Flannery Papers; "I.F.W.M. Clubs to Sponsor Programs," *Ames Daily Tribune Times*, 8/28/1933; Helen Ristvedt, "Musical Iowana," *Musical Notes* 3 (10/1/1932), 1, folder 8, box 2, Flannery Papers; *Musical Iowana*, 80; Yearbooks and Directories, Pilgrim Chapter, Iowa City, folder 1, box 9, Daughters of



Agnes V. Flannery (1879–ca. 1960). Photo from Agnes V. Flannery Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines.

The culmination of the IFMC's promotion of Iowa composers was the 1938 publication of *Musical Iowa* to celebrate the 100 years of music since the establishment of Iowa as a territory. Des Moines composer and poet Agnes V. Flannery (1879–ca. 1960) took over Schmidt's role in the IFMC, serving as chair of the American music department until 1934 and afterwards as state chair of Composers Research.<sup>64</sup> Like Schmidt, Flannery compiled information about Iowa composers and collected their scores for circulation.<sup>65</sup> She also authored a column, "With Our Composers,"

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the American Revolution Records, 1891–2002, SHSI-IC. Shaw was a member of Iowa City's Music Study Club from 1942 to 1980.

64. "Prairie Poets," *Mason City Globe-Gazette*, 4/11/1934.

65. Agnes V. Flannery, "American Music, Iowa Composers," *Musical Notes* 3, (10/1/1932), folder 2, box 7, Flannery Papers; "Musical Words by Iowans on Exhibit in Des Moines, Ia.," *Burlington Daily Hawk-Eye Gazette*, 1/11/1934. Some typed reports on musicians held by the State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines, are labeled "Compiled by Agnes V. Flannery."

in the Federation of Music Clubs' newsletter.<sup>66</sup> Flannery put out a call for composers of "serious type of music" who had lived in Iowa five or more years to send her their biographies and lists of works for *Musical Iowana*. Previous music chairs also contributed information.<sup>67</sup> Three clubwomen served as an editorial board, assisted by Des Moines members of the Federal Writers' Project.<sup>68</sup> The book's portrayals of the state's musicians are sometimes brief, yet it remains an important source of information on Iowa's musical history.

Although *Musical Iowana* primarily presents a picture of Iowa's active musical life in the early twentieth century, notices for its release featured the agrarian and pioneer imagery that continued to cling to the state's growth of artistic culture. Advertisements for the book show a pioneer wagon and stagecoach, and IFMC president Ristvedt's article on the volume paints a picture of settlers who had folk music but had nonetheless lost the "civilizing" arts of their forbearers.<sup>69</sup> However, Ristvedt's notion that Iowa was undergoing refinement to achieve "an expression of its own heart and genius" took a decidedly European bent. She hailed the influence of music from immigrants (German, Scandinavian, and Welsh) and cited the *Largo* of Dvořák's "New World" Symphony ("the thrilling second movement . . . the ascent toward an ideal in music") without mentioning either the composer's or the work's name, on the assumption that her readers were already familiar with it.<sup>70</sup> Despite the focus on Iowans in

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66. Agnes V. Flannery, "With Our Composers," *Musical Notes*, [2/15/1934], 3, 7, folder 2, box 7, Flannery Papers; "With Our Composers: Suggestions for Teaching Material by Teaching Iowa Composers," *Iowa Musical Notes*, February 1936, 4, folder 14, box 14, Schmidt Papers, ISU.


67. "The Story of a Book," *Iowa Music Notes* 10 (October 1938), 9, folder 2, box 7, Flannery Papers. There are similarities between some published biographies and those in "Iowa Musicians," a document created by the State Department of History and Archives and held by its successor, the State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines, which may date from Edgar R. Harlan's surveys in the 1920s.

68. "Musical Iowana Being Published," *Fairfield Daily Ledger*, 9/14/1938.

69. H.S.R. [Helen S. Ristvedt], "Prelude to *Musical Iowana* 1838-1938," *Iowa Music Notes* [10] (October 1938), 7, folder 2, box 7, Flannery Papers.

70. Ristvedt's emphasis on European music may also reveal clubwomen's disdain for African American jazz, which is more apparent in national club publications than in those from Iowa.






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the volume itself, European music associated with the state overshadowed any emphasis on native composers, a sign of their coming disappearance from club programs.

BY THE TIME the IFWC and the IFMC ceased actively promoting Iowa composers concerts, at least 140 women's clubs in more than 90 towns, almost half with populations under 5,000 people, had hosted events of some kind about Iowa composers at their meetings.<sup>71</sup> At the height of their formal programs, the IFWC and IFMC were highly effective in circulating information about Iowa's composers and their music to the women of the state. The IFWC reported that it had assisted between 700 and 1,000 clubwomen in their program preparations during 1931.<sup>72</sup> Composers were

71. This figure is based in part on digitized newspapers, which are not comprehensive.

72. "Fine Arts Department," *Iowa Clubwoman* 15 (September-October 1932), 9.

undoubtedly grateful for clubwomen's activities. Franz Kuschan, a Drake University professor, wrote to Schmidt that he hoped to meet "the woman who has taken such an active interest in furthering the cause of good music."<sup>73</sup>

In 1935, however, the IFMC began to sponsor composition contests, an activity that came to dominate its American music efforts. In later years, performances given at state meetings usually consisted of the music of the year's winners rather than oft-heard favorites.<sup>74</sup> Even as the number of club programs about Iowa's music dwindled, the most popular works continued to be heard occasionally. With the exception of Shaw's DAR-sponsored radio broadcasts, clubs did not readily take up the works of the following generation of Iowa composers. The music most popular with clubwomen was in a tonal, late nineteenth-century style, and it is possible that modernist compositions introduced technical difficulties that made them less programmable by amateur musicians. The only newer figure to appear with any regularity was Meredith Willson, who became well known through his radio appearances in the 1940s and 1950s. After Willson's *The Music Man* became a Broadway hit in 1957, it served as the subject of many club meetings, even though it was far from clubwomen's previous classical selections.<sup>75</sup>

In 1946 many clubs held programs about Iowa composers in celebration of the statehood centennial. Twenty years after she had begun promoting Iowa's musical legacy, Perle Schmidt donated her research materials to the State Department of History and Archives and gave 14 centennial programs, including "Antonín Dvořák in Iowa" and "Iowa Composers of Music." The latter talk indicated that she had compiled the names of 247 composers. By that time, she had become aware, probably from Faye MacMartin, of the Tama Philharmonic Society's concerts two decades earlier. Along with Agnes Flannery, Schmidt and MacMartin had become members of the Des Moines chapter of the National League of American Pen Women, a professional organization for

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73. Franz Kuschan to Perle Schmidt, 3/10/1925, folder 1, Schmidt files, SHSI-IC.

74. On the national federation's earlier contests, see Blair, *The Torchbearers*, 58.

75. Clubs in Maquoketa, Mechanicsville, Mount Pleasant, Redfield, Red Oak, and Schaller studied Willson or *The Music Man* in 1957–58. See women's club programs at SHSI, IC.

writers, composers, and artists. Schmidt's talk praised the Tama club as a historical first: a program consisting of an entire year of study of Iowa composers.<sup>76</sup>

Nonetheless, it was no longer to be expected that clubs' programs would contain numerous musical works by Iowa composers. In Iowa City the music department of the Women's Club drew on *Musical Iowa* to study the state's past; however, their 1946 program only featured music by its 1893 visitor, Dvořák.<sup>77</sup> In June of that year IFWC Music Chair Mrs. John Abild announced another federation initiative: a centennial song festival at the state fair, similar to the events of 1932–33, with state music groups "presenting favorite songs of the past 100 years." Selections by Iowa composers were to be included "to as great an extent as possible." In August, however, the *Cedar Rapids Gazette* indicated only that there would be a 20-minute program of vocal and piano solos composed by three clubwomen.<sup>78</sup> During National Music Week in 1946, the Cedar Rapids Woman's Club presented an "Iowa Musicale" featuring Lieurance's ubiquitous "By the Waters of Minnetonka" and music by Flannery, but the program also included multiple selections by well-known European composers.<sup>79</sup>

The amount of music by Iowa composers on club programs decreased in the 1950s and dramatically so in the 1960s. Although clubs presented composer programs as late as 1966, largely without performed musical selections, some of these events took the form of historical retrospectives involving a mere handful of the most familiar pieces. In 1954 the History and Literature division of the Ames Women's Club put on a pageant titled "History of Thy Past," which included a chorus singing works by Logan and

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76. Schmidt, "Iowa Composers of Music," typed manuscript, 2; and clipping, folder 8, box 15, Schmidt Papers, ISU (Schmidt's collection, 123 compositions, is extant in Special Collections, ISU Libraries); typed history of the Des Moines chapter of the National League of American Pen Women, folder 4, box 15, Schmidt Papers, ISU.

77. "Music Department of Women's Club to Meet Thursday," *Iowa City Press Citizen*, 10/1/1946.

78. "Plan Song Festival as Fair Feature," *Oelwein Daily Register*, 6/25/1946; "Woman's Club Members to Appear on State Fair Program," *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, 8/25/1946.

79. Program, "National Music Week, Iowa Musicale," Cedar Rapids Woman's Club, 5/8/[1946], folder 14, box 1, Flannery Papers.

Dvořák and Meredith Willson's "Iowa." In April 1966 the Fortnightly Literary Club in West Liberty heard only S. H. M. Byers's "Song of Iowa," "By the Waters of Minnetonka," Dvořák's *Largo*, and a talk on Willson.<sup>80</sup>

IFMC chairs appear to have continued to collect scores, and in 1974, members of 16 chapters of the Daughters of the American Revolution collaborated to produce a two-volume typed biographical dictionary of Iowa musicians, overseen by Rexine Beecher, who chaired its American Heritage Committee, but it was not published.<sup>81</sup>

WOMEN'S CLUBS had a major impact on the development of musical activities in Iowa in the early twentieth century. Nonetheless, the repertoire that was heard by numerous clubs over several decades is now virtually unknown. Given that the same composers' names consistently appeared on women's programs, and some figures even had clubs named for them, why didn't any of their compositions become a lasting part of the state's culture? As most of the club meetings were private events, it is difficult to know how Iowans' compositions were received by listeners. The events hosted by the Society of Music Teachers that predated women's club programs sometimes received effusive reviews. The *Ottumwa Daily Courier* was surprised by "the excellence of the work of the Iowa composers" at the society's 1903 concert, and the *Burlington Hawk-Eye* raved that "there is genius in Iowa as well as talent was proven by the masterful compositions."<sup>82</sup> However, private club performances in homes or civic venues were not typically reviewed. That some club members who prepared Iowa composers programs presented them to more than one club nonetheless suggests that they were popular.

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80. "Woman's Club Members Depict Iowa History Through Books at Meeting Titled 'History of Thy Past,'" *Ames Daily Tribune*, 2/9/1954; "Literary Club Meets," *Muscatine Journal and News-Tribune*, 4/14/1966.

81. Mrs. Loyd Beecher, ed., "Iowa Composers, Researched by 16 Chapters of the D.A.R. in Iowa," Daughters of the American Revolution Records, 1891-2002, SHSI-IC. Some of the scores collected by IFMC chairs are also in the holdings of SHSI-IC.

82. "Musicians Charm," *Ottumwa Daily Courier*, 6/25/1903; "Iowa Musicians Charm," *Burlington Hawk-Eye*, 6/26/1903.

In 1933, when Clear Lake clubs undertook study of the state's culture, Mrs. J. A. Tumbleson played works for piano by Iowa composers for the Library Reading Club in January, then for the EA Chapter of P.E.O. two weeks later.<sup>83</sup> In Fort Madison, Mrs. Charles Zwald presented Iowa composers' biographies and played their pieces for both the Iowa Club in 1934 and the Rebecca Pollard Study Club in 1935.<sup>84</sup> The reappearance of the same compositions on countless programs demonstrates that multiple works were considered worthy of repetition. These most often tended to be short songs or piano pieces, which were easier to rehearse and perform than extensive choral works or pieces that required instruments beyond the piano, or more prestigious orchestral works that were far beyond clubs' resources.

Yet a significant problem may have led to these compositions' demise: most of the classical compositions programmed by women's clubs had few if any regional associations other than the residence of their composers. As Iowa composers' classical works began to fade from programs, often what remained were the simpler, popular songs that expressed state pride and allowed for communal singing, such as "Iowa, Beautiful Land" or "Iowa, Proud Iowa."<sup>85</sup> William Pitts's "The Little Brown Church in the Vale" (also known as "The Church in the Wildwood"), associated with the chapel in Nashua, sometimes appeared amid classical selections. Ironically, the "Corn Song" was also frequently sung despite earlier clubwomen's attempts to dissociate their high-art efforts from Iowa's agrarian reputation. In contrast, most of the Iowa composers' pieces had no regional associations in either their titles and lyrics or their musical content (although Mokrejs's waltzes were published under the title "Valčik," reflecting his Czech heritage). Of clubwomen's repertoire, the Indianist compositions were the most "American" in their content. However, the most popular songs depict northern geographical regions: "By the Waters of Minnetonka" references Minnesota's Lake

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83. "Mrs. Naylor to Talk to Wa-Tan-Yes," *Mason City Globe-Gazette*, 1/21/1933; "Skit Will be Presented at Civic League," *Mason City Globe-Gazette*, 2/4/1933.

84. "Iowa Club Enjoys Program," *Fort Madison Evening Democrat*, 3/3/1934; "Rebecca Pollard Study Club," *Fort Madison Democrat*, 2/12/1935.

85. See "'State Song,' 'Corn Song,' and 'Iowa — Beautiful Land,'" *Annals of Iowa* 16 (1927), 52-57.

Minnetonka, and the lyrics of "Pale Moon" describe pine trees and a lagoon rather than fields of corn.

Ultimately, the composers promoted by Iowa clubwomen drew largely on the European heritage of classical music and produced no works that might serve as Iowa's musical equivalents to the regionalist novels of Ruth Suckow or the paintings of Grant Wood.<sup>86</sup> Given the European roots of many of the composers whose music women's clubs performed—Nagel, Rommel, Ruffrok, Scheve, and Stoye had all received their musical training in Germany—this is not surprising. Multiple compositions by Iowans drew on a German Romantic tradition. The editors of *Musical Iowana* asserted that they did not "intend to recognize Regionalism in art" and acknowledged that Iowa's musical development was "in every way similar to that of our neighbor states."<sup>87</sup> In 1957 the IFWC's state meeting featured an exhibit titled "Iowa through Art and Poetry," but it was unable to depict the state through its musical programming; Iowa State's faculty piano trio instead played classical music by European composers.

Numerous other factors in the second half of the twentieth century undoubtedly factored into the changes in Iowa women's clubs' musical programming as well: American women's clubs' turn to a more global focus, the overall decline in the size and number of women's clubs, the solidification of a largely European canon in American classical concerts, and the dominance of popular music transmitted through radio and television. Although the musical culture that women's clubs desired early in the century became well rooted in Iowa through music programs in schools and higher education and through the establishment of multiple orchestras and other classical music organizations, both professional and amateur, Iowa's musicians came to look to the broader world of classical music, rather than to the state's composers, for their repertoire. Yet between the world wars, led by club federations' nationalistic goals and the desire to create a culture of classical music in Iowa, Iowa women's clubs contributed to the position of Iowa composers through performances of their music across the state.

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86. Blum did compose a choral work depicting pioneers, *On the Sunset Trail*, op. 18 (1926), scored for male voices.

87. *Musical Iowana*, 10.