

The work which Paulette Geragi began in 1985 in the Falk Seminar proposed to be solely research and not a report of research. Mrs. Geragi, a seminar auditor in 1985 and early 1986, did indeed unearth the majority of facts reported in the later written-out Introduction to the Operettas of C.H. Gabriel. Therefore, it seems appropriate if not obligatory in the wake of her investigations and hypotheses, virtually turned into conclusions, that her work here, truly recognized in the attached Preface to a presently forthcoming edition, be again acknowledged. It seems, further, that this preface deserves to be included with the written researches of the Falk Seminar for 1985.

C.W. Brockett
on the date of binding:
October 7, 1987

THE OPERETTAS OF CHARLES HUTCHINSON GABRIEL

PREFACE

This edition of the three known operettas by C.H. Gabriel began as research for the first Jean B. Falk Seminar in American Musical Culture at Christopher Newport College. Although under my direction, the project was begun and is continued by Paulette T. Geragi. Her score of Pauline was for a time not merely our documentary pièce de resistance but was our sole connection to a composer whom we have in a comparatively short while come to appreciate for his efforts toward American amateur theater production. We feel, therefore, that Gabriel deserves a place in music's history. To Paulette, Harry Eskew at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, Terry W. York, Jack L. Ralston, Special Collections Librarian at CBN University, Jean Bonin representing the Tams-Witmark/Wisconsin Collection of Mills Music Library at the University of Wisconsin, William Kearns representing the Sonneck Society, Deane L. Root at the University of Pittsburgh, Carl Fischer, Inc., New York, the Iowa State Historical Library, Des Moines, the Interlibrary Loan Service of Christopher Newport College, and Mr. and Mrs. Emanuel Falk go my sincere thanks for their contributions toward this end.

C.W.B.

INTRODUCTION

Charles Hutchinson Gabriel (Wilton, Iowa, August 18, 1856 — Los Angeles, California, September 14, 1932) became one of our most beloved Gospel song composers. His music is inalienably associated with urban revivalism. He was, at the zenith of his career between 1911 and 1925, editor-in-chief for Homer Rodeheaver, Billy Sunday's Gospel voice and publisher. Yet while Gabriel's hymn-composition talent was largely recognized only in the twentieth century, his career had begun and had borne fruit in the milieu of secular as much as religious music in the nineteenth. Even many compositions prepared for religious institutions throughout his career have almost surprisingly secular texts (York, p.54). Indeed, although the first composition for which Gabriel received acceptance for publication was a hymn, the first of his own words and music he ever submitted, when aged thirteen or fourteen, was a duet for soprano and alto with chorus, representative, of the nineteenth-century American song tradition. George F. Root, its publisher, years later "remembered the circumstances surrounding the manuscript although thousands of songs had passed through his hands since that time" (Gospel Songs, p.38).

The extent of Gabriel's nineteenth-century secular composition is not known. Gabriel himself, only months before his death, exclaimed, "Yes, I have composed more than 7000 songs, mostly hymns, and I haven't stopped yet." (Los Angeles Examiner article, quoted by York, p.74) Many date from after his settling in Chicago in 1892. He did, number his collections published since 1890 in three publications, the first by a different author, J.H. Hall, to whom he had, however,

forwarded information. The secular music inventories are as follows.

	Hall (<u>Biography</u> 1914, (pp. 350-51)	Gabriel (<u>Personal</u> <u>Memoirs</u> , 1918 (p.49)	Gabriel Sixty <u>Years</u> , 1921 (p.
Juvenile cantatas	7	8	10
Operettas	3	4	4
Reed Organ Instruction Books		2	2
Piano Instruction Books		2	2
Piano Duet Books		2	2

In these inventories, we see no secular songs, but Gabriel does add to his Personal Memoirs "several hundreds of pieces of sheet music--vocal and instrumental." A friend's testimonial notes that certain such songs were printed "in sheet form." (Personal Memoirs, p.30)

Gabriel was an experienced scorer for band. He programmed his instrumental as well as vocal secular works on concerts. One such program included the "Medley Overture" and a "selection from [Henry] Farmer's Mass" for the Union Band. Incidentally, rendered also in this concert were the choral "Hail, O Hail", a duet "Happy Thou Pale Moon", trio "Evening Chimes", solo "Forebodings", men's quartet "Where Am De Children", classed Jubilee Song, piano duet "Silvery Moonlight", women's quartet "When the Birds Wake the Morn," solo "Little Gipsy Girl", duet "Beside the Throne", piano solo "Voices Among the Trees", and song [solo] and chorus "Nora Madain" (York, pp.46-7). Gabriel recognized his specialization in band music; he credited his melodic skill to his work with military bands which he was to instruct and lead in the late 1870's and 1880's. (Personal

The cantata, possibly designed to be staged, was another veritable proving ground for Gabriel's operettas. Such "juvenile" works were performed with adult complements. (York, p.95) In reality, Gabriel's operettas also belong to the stratum of Church-Social music and the tradition of singing schools. And yet, the first to be published is billed "operetta for adults" in the cantata section of "Fillmore's Music" (Heart Songs, 1893, back cover; Male Choir [1], 1896, back cover). Although the cantatas contain spoken dialog, with rare exception they sport no overture. The fundamental difference between staged "day-school" cantatas, like A day in the Woods (1889), A Visit to Grandpa (1890), The Jolly Picnic Party (John Church, 1893) or the Christmas How We Waited for Santa Claus (1889-90) and the operettas seems to be length. Cantatas consulted were on the average only a third as long as the operettas.

That four unnamed operettas are counted by Gabriel himself after 1918 presents an enigma. Hall's list of 1914 numbers only three, and it is conceivable that the fourth, unlocated, was published between these listings. This assumes that Gabriel is not counting as operetta some shorter playlet like his 23-page Love finds the Way, or The detective that father hired (1912). Gabriel did claim two of his own operetta librettos (Personal Memoirs, p.50), both of which we have in The Merry Milkmaids and Pauline. On the cover and title page of Pauline one reads that Gabriel is accorded "The Merry Milkmaids," "The Merry Cyclers", etc. One may strongly suspect then, that his fourth operetta, not being advertised, does not pertain to the nineteenth century. If so, it was published by some other firm. In any event,

nothing to the contrary has surfaced in response to calls for information and the check of the firm of Carl Fischer that acquired the operettas' publishing house, Fillmore Brothers. The conclusion, that these are Gabriel's only purely theatrical works from the nineteenth century, may stand, even if by default.

Gabriel relates that he wrote both the libretto and music of The Merry Milkmaids 1891) in ten days (Personal Memoirs, p.34). It was for the King's Daughters of Grace Methodist Church in San Francisco (21st and Capp Streets), where Gabriel was in 1889-1890. Conceivably, Gabriel, whom the directory lists as "music teacher" (Smoak, p.161) had secular contacts. There is no information concerning the first performance, nor evidence that his first operetta has ever been revived. This is, unfortunately, the unanswered question adumbrating the other two dramas.

The plot bears a personal stamp in its locale, characters, and daily activities. Gabriel, raised on an Iowa farm, evokes memories with both characters, down to the very accent of their speech, and events, like the evening milking. The real value of this and the other librettos' background issues from the vignette of life in the 1890's that they provide. In the background is Gabriel's own involvement, as in youth concerts, accompanied by a small Estey organ (Personal Memoirs, p.24), on the Fourth of July (Personal Memoirs, p.27), or reckoning the status of the amateur singer, right up to the 1920's (Church Music, pp. 22-35). The ephemeral character of all three librettos--'a day in the life of'--conveys a certain experiential tone too. Despite his lack of formal musical training, seen in expressions like "fol la la," Gabriel's words are carefully, even at times symbolically, graced by his music. Typical is the

religiosity of his cadential harmonies in No. 26, a lovely duet about "blessed hope" (especially p. 99). The poem exhibits quality also.

The libretto of The Merry Cyclers (1896) is by Palmer Hartsough (1844-1932). About him Gabriel records definitively, "Palmer Hartsough is a name familiar to those who sing Gospel songs. He is one of the few remaining of the 'old school' type, into whose writing commercialism did not enter" (The Singers, pp.29-30). Hartsough was educated at Plymouth, Ypsilanti, and Kalamazoo, Michigan and was among the pupils of George F. Root whom he impressed with his verse writing. In 1893 he associated with the Fillmore Brothers, and in 1915 he was teaching vocal music in Ontario, Wisconsin. Hartsough's picture also appears in Gabriel's reference.

In its Part I, this libretto is inferior to The Merry Milkmaids; the music follows suit with more repetitions of entire sections, sometimes with changed key, sometimes uncharacteristically leitmotivic, and with doublings in the harmony. But the music of Part II improves along with the text and at times is exquisite with its waltz (No. 35, p.118) and a Sousa-like march (No. 40). Gabriel's style is better articulated in this work, which often shows a preference for sixteenth-note embroidery on final or weak beats and frequent transitory minor harmonies. Symbolism is more apparent also--the diamond note-heads and series of augmented fourths associated with the devil, whose name the women of the trio are not allowed to utter (pp.107,112), and running thirds, skipping grace notes, and trills associated with spinning tricycle wheels (pp. 82, 88). The ensembles and instrumental sections are well developed too with an artful sextet, No. 33 (mis-labeled "trio and octette" in the Table of

Contents) developed out of the aforementioned "bedeviled" trio.

Pauline, Or An Eventful Day (1899) displays some distinctive features. Its score gives metronomic prescriptions telling us what Gabriel's idea of waltz (No. 11, chorus) or march (No. 13) tempo really was and helping to characterize the sort of quick step which starts No. 10. Happily, measures are no longer divided between braces of score. While the country life of milkmaids and town life of cyclers is earlier featured, this latest work emphasizes national pride. Patriotic expressions like "All honor to the Stars and Stripes forever!" (No. 14), Uncle Sam and "hip, hip, hooray" (No. 26) and such a musical Americanism as the rag-like gesture on "witty" (p. 68) are illustrative. Pauline is also clothed with a more noticeable garb of religiosity, seen in its lullaby (No. 23) and "Evening bells" (No. 28), as its invisible chorus intentionally quotes "Nearer my God to Thee." Different, too, are black roles with dialect.

All three operettas were published in Cincinnati by the Fillmore Brothers (see Hall, pp. 273-87). The original page format of each is 7 inches wide by 9-3/4 inches high. The Merry Milkmaids is conserved by the Library of Congress, also reported by the Occidental College, University of Illinois and University of Texas libraries. The Tams-Witmark/Wisconsin Collection catalogs both The Merry Milkmaids and The Merry Cyclers, or Love the Golden Key, with separate stage manager guides. The latter operetta is also located in the Library of Congress. Finally, Pauline, or An Eventful Day is privately owned by Paulette T. Geragi of Newport News, Virginia. Although we cannot accept this copy as unique, no other has yet surfaced. On its guard leaf is inscribed "Sept. 26, 1906/Arthur L. Isley [Mrs. Geragi's

uncleJ/Liberty, N.C./[Liberty] N[ormal] C[ollege]. Further investigation has led to dead ends.

The scores indicate no special technical requirements which would discourage modernizing. Even without ubiquitous cues or designated props, they contain the best guide for realization in directions interspersed among numbers. Moreover, in the The Merry Cyclers and Pauline prefatory suggestions are published with the score. A capella ensembles are designated "sing without accompaniment," indicating that for all other unaccompanied passages the accompanist might play the vocal score. On occasion, passages for the accompaniment alone, which dot the score, contain clear prescriptions for supplementary instruments: a "violin obligato" (The Milkmaids, No. 21) and bells (No. 29). A more enigmatic direction, "Basses", that overlays bass octaves of the march refrain of Merry Milkmaids, No. 3, the men having been designated "brigade" and no words being present, implies borrowing some "military brass" rather than designating men's voices. A gavotte-like instrumental "interlude" in Merry Cyclers, Part I Finale, was separately published as "The Merry Cyclers' Minuet. C.H.G." in Gabriel's The Perfect Organ Method (Gabriel, 1900, p. 63). This promotes the assumption that we have in the reed organ a serviceable accompaniment for Gabriel's operettas. (The appropriateness of reed organs for accompanying voices in Sunday school and auditorium is treated in The New Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments, 3, pp. 223,225-6). Stage directions refer only to "instrument". In The Merry Cyclers there are no fewer than thirty-two different singing roles, as opposed to twenty in The Merry Milkmaids and eighteen in Pauline. With soloists pragmatically doubling in the choruses, modern organizations could probably assure

each Cyclers cast member a solo!

Naive and saccharin, Gabriel's operetta is precisely for "furnishing the young people (in and out of the church) an altogether pure, chaste and wholesome entertainment." (The Merry Milkmaids, p. 4) Taken as the contribution of principally one fashioner of one genre, its aesthetic potential, however, lies above and beyond what the foregoing commentary may relate. Real artistic worth resides in Gabriel's perception of the values of music and verse, for which music should be composed, not the reverse (Gospel Songs, p. 12) and his regard for others' work. Although an occasional reflection of Balfe (Merry Cyclers, No. 27) or an ideal fugue subject (Merry Milkmaids, No. 10, recitative) may steal into his music, Gabriel is inventive throughout; in fact, he reproves the plagiarist, "a most contemptible thief" (Church Music, p.58, "DON'TS").

Gabriel pays his highest respects to composers of history, from Ambrose to Puccini. Almost telepathically he writes "If someone's work arouses scorn or derision it is entirely safe from mediocrity . . . and while thousands worshiped at the throne of Bayreuth, the few whom Wagner dethroned call him impostor. Mediocrity is neither envied nor emulated." (The Singers, p.72; Personal Memoirs, p.46) Wagner, he claims, "caught and transcribed the echoes of the divine music sung by the morning stars at the creation of the world." Chopin, he continues, "carries us into the worlds yet to be." (Personal Memoirs, p.46) The man who so admired his musical forebears but whose own successes made him the Irving Berlin of Gospel song (Stevenson, p.91) is left to perorate on his educational shortcomings with the inspiration and facetiousness of a libretto.

If not [the result of study and determination], then I am inclined to credit Madame Blavatsky's theory and claim the reincarnation of some long-haired fossil of the dim past ages. I never studied theory, harmony, composition or counterpoint under a teacher. I never studied rhetoric, phraseology or poesy with an instructor. . .I urge upon you to make the most of your privileges. (Church Music, p.60)

His posthumous reward is to stand beside American colleagues who enriched our musical culture.

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MUSIC DIVISION

April 8, 1987

Dear Mrs. Paulette T. Geragi:

Your letter of February 2, addressed to the Copyright Office, was referred to the Music Division of the Library of Congress for reply. We found no titles of operettas by Charles H. Gabriel beyond those mentioned in your letter nor do we have any biographical information concerning him not already available to you that we could discover. However, we did discover that the Iowa State Historical Department, Division of Historical Museums and Archives at East Twelfth and Grand Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50319 has a biographical file on Gabriel and may have the information you seek.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Rodney H. Mill".

Rodney H. Mill
Music Specialist

Mrs. Paulette T. Geragi
17 Edgemoor Drive
Newport News, VA 23603

18 April 1986

Mrs. Leslie A. Gardner
Library
Iowa State Historical Department
East 12th and Grand Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

Dear Mrs. Gardner:

Thank you very much for searching out and sending me copies of the available material that the Library had on Charles H. Gabriel. I am enclosing a check to cover the cost of duplicating the material. The remainder over the cost is to be donated to the Library to help continue its work.

I do have a request to make regarding the material that you sent. Would it be possible for you to identify and date the sources of the material? I shall list the questions on a separate sheet and enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope to facilitate the reply.

Thank you again for your assistance and the Library's generosity in sharing its knowledge.

Sincerely,

Paulette T. Geragi

PAULETTE T. GERAGI

CF: Dr. Clyde W. Brockett

3 Enclosures:

1. Check
2. Questions
3. Addressed envelope

PTG:ptg

17 Edgemoor Drive
Newport News, Virginia 23603

31 March 1985

Iowa State Historical Department
Division of Historical Museum and Archives
East Twelfth and Grand Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

Dear Curator:

I am participating in the Jean B. Falk Seminar being conducted at Christopher Newport College, chaired by Dr. Clyde W. Brockett, which concentrates on American music.

I am particularly interested in and am researching music composed and published in the nineteenth century. I am focusing on Charles H. Gabriel.

I have in my possession a copy of his operetta PAULINE or AN EVENTFUL DAY, which was published in 1899 by The Fillmore Brothers Company of Cincinnati and New York. On the cover it states that Gabriel is composer of THE MERRY MILKMAIDS and THE MERRY CYCLERS and has after that "etc" which would indicate that he had created other works before the end of the nineteenth century.

I am aware that he became associated with The Rodeheaver Company in the early part of the twentieth century and was quite prolific, but at present I am more concerned with his nineteenth century compositions.

I was very pleased to find in the RESOURCES OF AMERICAN MUSIC HISTORY, published by the University of Illinois, 1981, that your Museum had information about Charles H. Gabriel.

Would it be possible to provide me with copies of this material, for which I shall be happy to defray the expense, so that I may examine and include data from it in the paper being prepared. For the material furnished by your Museum full credit will be given for your participation.

I am looking forward to your response.

Sincerely,



PAULETTE P. GERACI

CC: Dr. Clyde W. Brockett
PTG/ptg

17 Edgemoor Drive
Newport News, Virginia 23603