

The Tams-Witmark Collection at Westminster Choir College

by William Osborne

The Tams-Witmark Collection of choral music housed in the Talbott Library of Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey, is an extraordinary repository of more than 680 titles (many in multiple copies), from the period 1880-1920. My interest in it was provoked by a seminar which I was preparing on American Choral Music from 1860 to 1930, so my investigation admittedly reflects a distinct American bias. (I hope that another sleuth will enumerate the collection's made-in-Europe holdings in detail.) Assuming that the managers of this commercial operation stocked primarily what they thought would bring them a profit, the collection surely reflects a wide swath of what was being written and performed during the period which it encompasses. Furthermore, the existence of many full scores and sets of parts makes possible the performance of some of these works in their full orchestral garb.

First, a bit of background. Tams-Witmark today remains the most visible publisher and marketer of Broadway musicals, a veritable household name in the trade. One of its parents, the publishing house of Arthur W. Tams, had its origins in 1872 when Mr. Tams, having served as a stage manager for several opera companies, began to amass what a *Musical Courier* headline of 1897 was to proclaim "The Largest Musical Library in the World."¹ Tams began this monstrous collection by browsing through secondhand bookstores and importing scores from Europe on speculation. By 1897 he claimed to

own 2,000 operas, most with complete performance materials.

In his Library Mr. Tams has his corps of copyists so systematized that he can copy the orchestration of an opera of 1,000 pages in twenty-four hours, or in the same time turn out 500 chorus parts for a large singing society which would cover 5,000 pages.²

The elaborate frontispiece which graced many Tams editions proclaimed that the firm had "Music of Every Description for Rent. Oratorios, Cantatas, Masses, Anthems, Te Deums, Octavo Choruses, Operas, Operettas, Orchestrations, Excerpts, Suites, Concert Music." Another early Tams publication declared the firm a Music Publisher and Importer and owner of a Circulating Music Library with "Music to Rent for Churches, Choral Unions, Symphony Societies, Amateur and Professional Opera Companies, etc." The firm by then maintained offices at 109 West 28th Street, the very center of Tin Pan Alley.

The other parent, M. Witmark and Sons, had its beginnings in 1886 as a publisher of popular songs and instrumental arrangements, becoming one of the firms which defined the industry later called Tin Pan Alley. On 17 September 1898 the company announced formation of The Witmark Music Library at street level in their building at 8 West 29th Street, containing "a main room, an oratorio room, a reception room - the musical world in miniature." New Yorkers were informed that the Library had "constantly at hand, for sale and to hire, the *largest* collection of Vocal Concert Numbers and Excerpts in America." Below were listed the

various kinds of music available "for Musical Directors of Symphony, Oratorio and other high class concerts" as well as "for conductors of Opera and Comic Opera. Music of every description arranged, transposed, copied, hectographed, lithographed, &c."³

The two firms merged their libraries in 1925 to create a behemoth. Their choral catalogue (which went through at least 26 editions, all of them apparently identical and equally incomplete) proudly proclaimed that the Tams-Witmark Music Library, Inc., by then located at 115-117 West 45th Street, was the "Largest Music Library in the United States." Statistics I will quote suggest that we ought not to scoff at such an assertion.

About 1962 the rental collection was broken up and deposited in several archival libraries across the country - the Library of Congress, University of Wisconsin, Princeton University, Westminster Choir College, and the Eastman School of Music. No records remain, but apparently the rental Library had become a moribund operation, so the Tams-Witmark hierarchy, in need of space, made a precipitous decision to dispose of it on a take-it-or-leave-it basis. The University of Wisconsin received the music theatre repertoire and has recently completed cataloging its repository of 37,000 different items. These represent 1,623 individual pieces, ranging from scores and parts to libretti, promptbooks, and playbills.

The choral collection at Westminster is much less bulky, but it extends from major oratorios to slender bits of liturgical music. Apparently much more substantial

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when it arrived, an unfortunate circumstance led to the destruction of an unquantifiable number of scores and parts. The Choir College at that time simply had no proper place to house Tams-Witmark's munificent gift and was forced to store it for seven years in the milking room of a dairy barn near Kendall Park, New Jersey. When the gift was "unwrapped," some of it was found to be in such an irreparable state of decay it had to be destroyed. Furthermore, no accurate inventory of the collection existed, even in New York, so that a typed shelf-list made in 1969 represents only what survived the ravages of the elements. Some selective (and recorded) weeding of standard titles and editions since then has trimmed that list to 466 titles, each with anywhere from a handful to 200 or more vocal scores. It is logical to presume that full scores and sets of orchestral parts originally accompanied those works which were orchestrated; most have disappeared however. One resulting anomaly is the presence of orchestral parts for works no longer represented by a vocal score, such as Charles H. Gabriel's *Pauline*.

All of the extant vocal scores are in standard engraved editions, but many

of the full scores and parts, especially for the American works, exist only in handwritten copies by the Tams and Witmark scribes. The scope of those original libraries might be grasped from the realization that the Westminster holding contains at least remnants of twenty-one sets of parts for both Dubois' *The Seven Last Words of Christ* and Handel's *Messiah*, fourteen for Alfred R. Gaul's *The Holy City*, and six for Max Bruch's *Fair Ellen*. Many of these are in fact alternate, scaled-down orchestrations.

A separate file of what Tams labelled "Director's Scores" (vocal scores reserved for the conductor) did survive. I have no way of knowing how complete this category remains, but I found and listed 218 American-made titles, for which some full scores and parts exist. The availability of a single vocal score no longer under copyright protection with its performance materials thus allows potential use by ensembles today.

Of the 312 titles with multiple vocal scores, many are by the predictable composers: Bach (17), Beethoven (6), Dvořák (7), Elgar (8), Gounod (8), Handel (6), Liszt (5), Mendelssohn (18), and Schumann (8).

Other names, not as immediately recognizable, lend insight as to what repertoire was popular at the time: Max Bruch [1838-1920] (7), Frederick H. Cowen [1872-1935] (8), Neils Gade [1817-1890] (5), Alfred R. Gaul [1837-1913] (8), Alexander Campbell MacKenzie [1847-1935] (5), Charles Villiers Stanford [1852-1924] (5), and Arthur Sullivan (without Gilbert) [1842-1900] (5). Many of these are standard pieces readily available from other sources or are in editions which have been superseded and made musicologically irrelevant. The discreet pruning of the collection to which I alluded earlier has been of such works and editions. Many full scores have survived, although usually without orchestral parts. However, full performance materials remain extant for some of the more exotic titles. A trio of examples: Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's *Scenes from "The Song of Hiawatha"* of 1898 (with 126 Novello vocal scores), Jules Massenet's *Eve* of 1875 (150 scores from G. Schirmer, another 150 from Williams), and Camille Saint-Saëns' *The Deluge*, opus 45, also of 1875 (240 Ditson scores).

The Americana holdings (160 titles with multiple vocal scores, 218 with single vocal scores) represent a fascinating treasure trove. Composers (I have included those born abroad who spent a crucial part of their careers here) range from major figures to those so utterly obscure I have not been able to unearth even the slightest bibliographic note about them. Their works run a similarly wide gamut, from the substantial and significant cantatas of Horatio Parker and others to workaday utilitarian products written by various house composers such as Ira B. Wilson.

Westminster Choir College, which has excellent facilities today, treats this material as a Special Collection and wants to provide as much access as possible to interested scholars and performers. The Tams-Witmark Collection stands as a singular resource in breadth and variety apt for both students of Americana and choral conductors concerned with repertoire from the era which it represents.

Notes

¹ *Musical Courier*. Vol. XXXIV, No. 7, 17 February 1897, p. 8.

² *Ibid*.

³ Witmark, Isidore and Goldberg, Isaac, *The Story of The House of Witmark: From Ragtime to Swingtime* (New York: Lee Furman, Inc., 1939), p. 235.

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A Checklist of Works by American Composers in the Tams-Witmark Collection

Information as to scoring, publisher, date of composition/publication, length, and other bibliographic material can be found in *American Oratorios and Cantatas: A Catalog of Works Written in the United States from Colonial Times to 1985*, compiled by Thurston J. Dox (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1986), or in a list available from the Editor of *The Choral Journal*. (A review of Thurston Dox's book appears on page 45 of this issue.)

Works Available With Multiple Vocal Scores

- Ashford, Emma Louise (1850-1930)
The Light of Life, A Christmas Cantata/42 copies
- Ballard, Louis W.
The 91st Psalm/32 copies
- Beach, Mrs. H. H. A. (1867-1944)
The Rose of Avontown, op. 30/84 copies + parts
- The Sea-Fairies, op. 59/61 copies
- Sylvania, op. 46/61 copies
- Berwald, William (1864-1948)
The Crucifixion and The Resurrection/100 copies
- Rustic Life/78 copies
- The Way of the Cross/64 copies
- Brewer, John Hyatt (1856-1931)
The Herald of Spring/33 copies

- Hesperus/67 copies
- The Holy Night/100 copies
- Song of the Summer Winds/56 copies
- Twilight Pictures/56 copies
- Bristow, George Frederick (1825-1898)
The Great Republic, op. 47/49 copies
- Buck, Dudley (1839-1909)
The Centennial Meditation of Columbia/62 copies
- Christ the Victor/100 copies + parts
- The Coming of the King/100 copies
- The 46th Psalm, op. 57/55 copies
- The Legend of Don Munio, op. 62/62 copies + parts
- Paul Revere's Ride/77 copies + full score and parts
- Scenes from the Golden Legend/35 copies
- The Song of the Night/39 copies
- The Story of the Cross/100 copies + parts
- The Triumph of David/100 copies
- The Voyage of Columbus/47 copies + full score and parts
- Bullard, Frederick Field (1864-1904)
The Holy Infant/88 copies + parts
- The Resurrection According to St. John/100 copies
- Burton, Frederick Russell (1861-1909)
Hiawatha/52 copies
- Busch, Carl (1862-1943)
The Four Winds/100 copies
- King Olaf/100 copies + full score
- The League of the Alps/36 copies
- Paul Revere's Ride/100 copies
- Camp, John Spencer (1858-1946)
The Prince of Life/69 copies + parts
- The Prince of Peace/100 copies + parts
- Chadwick, George Whitefield (1854-1931)
Land of our Hearts/35 copies
- Lovely Rosabelle/100 copies + parts
- Phoenix Expirans (The Dying Phoenix)/100 copies
- The Pilgrims/100 copies + parts

- Clokey, Joseph W. (1890-1960)
The Vision, op. 20/32 copies
- Clough-Leigher, Henry (1874-1956)
Across the Fields to Anne/100 copies
- The Righteous Branch/100 copies
- Coerne, Louis Adolphe (1870-1922)
The Landing of the Pilgrims/64 copies
- Cole, Rosseter G. (1866-1952)
The Passing of Summer/35 copies
- Coombs, Charles Whitney (1859-1940)
The Ancient of Days/100 copies
- The First Christmas/100 copies
- The Vision of St. John/46 copies
- Dickinson, Clarence (1873-1969)
The Redeemer/100 copies
- Dvořák, Antonin (1841-1904)
The American Flag/93 copies + full score
- Edwards, Julian (1855-1910)
The Mermaid/100 copies
- Florio, Caryl [aka William J. Robjohn] (1843-1920)
The Night at Bethlehem/100 copies + parts
- Foote, Arthur (1853-1937)
Six Flower Songs, op. 49/48 copies
- Lygeia, op. 58/57 copies
- The Skeleton in Armour, op. 28/100 copies + parts
- The Wreck of the Hesperus, op. 17/68 copies
- Gadsby, Henry
Columbus; A Dramatic Cantata/98 copies
- Geibel, Adam (1853-1933)
The Nativity/100 copies
- Gaul, Harvey B. (1881-1945)
The Babe of Bethlehem/86 copies
- Gilchrist, William Wallace (1846-1919)
A Christmas Idyll/54 copies
- The Legend of the Bended Bow/70 copies
- The Rose/100 copies + parts
- The Syrens/72 copies

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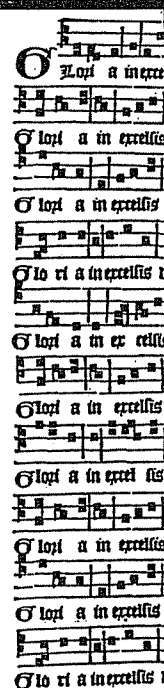
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 The Legend of Granada, op. 45/100 copies
 Lelawala/63 copies
 The Nightingale and The Rose, op. 54/50 copies
 Haesche, William E. (1867-1929)
 Young Love's Bride, Ballad For Women's Voices/100 copies
 Hammond, William G. (1874-1945)
 Messiah Victorious/100 copies
 Harker, F. Flaxington (1876-1936)
 The Star of Bethlehem/100 copies
 Hawley, Charles Beach (1858-1915)
 The Christ Child/125 copies
 Herman, Reinhold L. (1849-1920)
 Song of the Virgins, op. 47/100 copies
 Hodges, Daniel F.
 Rebecca/44 copies + full score and parts
 Hosmer, Elmer Samuel (1862-1945)
 The Man Without A Country/100 copies
 Housely, Henry (1852-1925)
 Omar Khayyam/100 copies
 Huss, Henry Holden (1862-1953)
 Ave Maria/136 copies
 Festival Sanctus/100 copies
 Jordan, Jules (1850-1927)
 Barbara Frietchie/100 copies + parts
 Klein, Bruno Oscar (1858-1911)
 Messe Solennelle, op. 82/60 copies

Lahee, Henry (1856-1953)
 The Building of the Ship/100 copies + parts
 The Sleeping Beauty/83 copies
 Leps, Wassili (1873-1943)
 Yo-Nennen/57 copies
 Loveland, Benjamin
 The New-Born King/100 copies
 Lynes, Frank (1858-1913)
 The Curfew Bell, op. 17
 MacFarlane, William C. (1870-1945)
 The Message From The Cross/100 copies + full score
 Manney, Charles Fonteyn (1872-1951)
 The Manger Throne/100 copies
 The Resurrection/100 copies + parts
 Marks, James Christopher (1863-1946)
 Victory Divine/100 copies
 Marzo, Eduardo (1852-1929)
 Mass Solennelle, op. 19/37 copies
 The Whole Year Round/36 copies
 Matthews, Harry Alexander (1879-1973)
 The City of God/38 copies
 The Life Everlasting/91 copies
 The Story of Christmas/100 copies
 The Triumph of the Cross/100 copies
 Matthews, John Sebastian (1870-1934)
 The Eve of Grace/73 copies
 The Paschal Victor/97 copies
 Mietzke, George A.
 Out of the Depths Have I Cried Unto Thee/62 copies

Millard, Harrison (1829-1895)
 Mass in B-Flat/37 copies
 Popular Mass in G/63 copies
 Mohr, Hermann (1830-1896)
 To The Genius of Music/69 copies + full score and parts
 Neidlinger, William Harold (1863-1924)
 Prayer, Promise, and Praise/39 copies
 Nevin, Ethelbert (1862-1901)
 The Quest/69 copies + parts
 Nevin, George Balch (1859-1933)
 The Adoration/100 copies
 The Crucified/100 copies
 Parker, Horatio (1863-1919)
 Ballad of a Knight and His Daughter/100 copies
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 The Kobolds, Op. 21/90 copies
 The Legend of St. Christopher/150 copies
 A Star Song, op. 51/94 copies + full score
 Parker, James Cutler Dunn (1828-1916)
 The Blind King/47 copies
 The Life of Man/55 copies
 Redemption Hymn/100 copies + parts
 Saint John/61 copies
 Patton, Willard (1853-1924)
 Isaiah/71 copies
 Platte, A. W.
 The River of Rest, op. 32/1/100 copies
 Pratt, Silas Camaliel (1846-1916)
 The Inca's Farewell/100 copies
 Protheroe, Daniel (1866-1934)
 Eastertide/100 copies
 Robyn, Alfred G. (1860-1935)
 The Ascension/47 copies
 Rogers, James H. (1857-1940)
 The Man of Nazareth/100 copies
 Root, George Frederick (1820-1895)
 The Haymakers/100 copies + parts
 Rutenber, Charles B.
 The Christ/43 copies
 Scarmolin, A. Louis (1890-1969)
 The Temptation on the Mount/90 copies
 Schneckner, Peter August (1850-1903)
 The Fatherhood of God/88 copies
 The Harvest is Ripe/100 copies
 The Hope of the World/100 copies
 Lazarus/36 copies
 The Lord Reigneth/42 copies
 The Risen King/100 copies + parts
 The Story of Calvary/76 copies
 Shelley, Harry Rowe (1858-1947)
 Death and Life/100 copies + parts
 The Pilgrims/69 copies
 The Soul Triumphant/65 copies
 Shepard, Thomas G. (1848-1905)
 From Sepulchre to Throne/100 copies
 The Word Made Flesh/56 copies
 Spence, William R.
 The Story of Bethlehem/75 copies
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 The Glory of the Resurrection/32 copies

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Stevenson, Frederick (b. 1845)
Easter Even and Morn, op. 31/70
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Stewart, Humphrey John (1854-1932)
The Nativity/100 copies + parts
Victory/32 copies
Story, E. B.
The Saviour's Advent, op. 10/39 copies
Stoughton, Roy Spaulding (1884-1953)
The Woman of Sychar/36 copies
Surrette, Thomas W. (1861-1941)
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Two Harvests/82 copies
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Dream Pictures/95 copies
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Woodman, R. Huntington (1861-1943)
The Message of the Star/100 copies
A Thanksgiving Day Ode/41 copies
Wooler, Alfred (1867-1937)
Hail the Victor/37 copies
Zoellner, Heinrich
The Battle of the Huns, op. 12/full
score and parts

Works Available With A Single Vocal Score

Andrews, Eben A.
Ruth and Boaz + parts
Ashford, Emma L. (1850-1930)
Cross and Crown
Easter Dawn
The Star of Promise
The Prince of Peace
Ballard, Louis W.
Prayer and Praise
Bartlett, James C. (1850-1929)
From Death to Life
Beach, Mrs. H. H. A. (1867-1944)
Festival Jubilate For The Dedication of
the Woman's Building at the World's
Columbian Exposition, Chicago
Berge, Irene (1867-1926)
The Conqueror
The Cradle of Bethlehem
The Shepherd's Vision
Wondrous Cross
Berwald, William (1864-1948)
The Birth of Christ
The Crucifixion
The Voice of Fate

Bliss, Paul (1872-1933)
Bethlehem
The Mound-Builders
Pan, On A Summer Day
O Night, O Lovely Night, An Idyll
Blodgett, Benjamin C. (1838-1925)
The Prodigal Son, op. 32
Bradbury, William B. (1816-1868)
Esther + parts
New Flora's Festival
Broad, John Astor (1845-1883)
Joseph
Ruth, The Moabite + parts
Brown, William S.
Mass in B-Flat
Buck, Dudley (1839-1909)
Hymn to Music
The Nun of Nidaros, op. 83
Chorus of Spirits and Hours, op. 90
Communion Service in C
Bullard, Frederick Field and Mayhew,
Grace
The Sleighing Frolic
Burton, Frederick Russell (1861-1909)
The Legend of Sleepy Hollow
Butterfield, James A.
Belshazzar + parts
Ruth, The Gleaner
Cadman, Charles Wakefield (1881-1946)
The Vision of Sir Launfel
Four American Indian Songs, op. 45
Camp, John Spencer (1858-1946)
God Is Our Refuge And Strength, op. 6
Chadwick, George Whitefield (1854-1931)
Judith
Noel
Chadwick, J. M.
Joseph's Bondage
Chaffin, Lucien Gates (1846-1927)
The Holy Night
Clough-Leighter, Henry (1874-1956)
Across the Fields to Ann, op. 30
Christ Triumphant, op. 35
Give Thanks Unto God, op. 29/1
Cole, Rosseter G. (1866-1952)
The Rock of Liberty, op. 36
Converse, Frederick S. (1871-1940)
The Answer of the Stars
Coombs, Charles Whitney (1859-1940)
The Sorrows of Death, A Lenten Motet
Dale, Norwood
Immanuel
Damrosch, Leopold (1832-1885)
Ruth and Naomi
Sulamith, The Song of Songs
Damrosch, Walter (1862-1950)
Manila Te Deum, op. 5
Day, George Henry
Dies Irae
Delamarter, Eric (1880-1953)
The Testimony of John
Dicks, Ernest A.
Christ, Our King
Doane, William Howard (1832-1915)
The Night of Glory
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Waiting For Santa Claus
Wise Men From The East
Donovan, John Charles
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Edwards, Julian (1855-1910)
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 The Knight of Toggenberg
 Prayer and Praise
 Hadley, Henry K. (1871-1937)
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 Hammond, William G. (1874-1945)
 A Ballad of Lorraine
 Hart, Henry William (b. 1874)
 The Revolt of the Toys

Herbert, Victor (1859-1924)
 The Captive, op. 25
 Christ is Risen
 Hewitt, John Hill (1801-1890)
 The Revellers
 Hosmer, Elmer S. (1862-1945)
 Columbus
 The Pilgrims of 1620
 Howe, Edward F.
 Howe's Complete Vespers in F, op. 17
 Hull, Phineas G.
 Jephthah And His Daughter
 Jordan, Jules (1850-1927)
 A Night Service
 Kelly, Edgar Stillman (1857-1944)
 The Pilgrim's Progress, op. 37
 The Shorter Pilgrim's Progress, op. 37a
 Sacred Choruses From Ben-Hur, op. 17
 Klein, Bruno Oscar (1858-1911)
 Missa De Nativitate Domini, op. 44
 Knowlton, Fanny Snow (b. 1859)
 Hawthorn and Lavender, A Song Cycle
 Lang, Edith
 The Heavenly Message
 LeJeal, Alois F.
 Vespers
 Mass in D
 Second Mass in E Flat
 Third Mass in A
 Requiem Mass and Libera, op. 44
 Fourth Mass, op. 50
 Leavitt, W. J. D. (b. 1841)
 Camb'yses, or the Pearl of Asia, op. 50
 Leonard, W. A.
 Mass in E-Flat
 Unison Mass in F
 Lerman, J. W.
 Jehovah

Lorenz, Edmund S. (1854-1942)
 The Easter Message
 Joy to the World
 Lowden, C. Harold
 Everlasting Life
 Lyon, Finley
 The Great Light
 Praise and Thanksgiving
 Macy, James C. (1845-1918)
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 Manney, Charles Fonteyn (1872-1951)
 The Rose of the World
 Marks, James Christopher (1863-1946)
 Victory Divine
 Marston, George W. (1840-1901)
 David
 Martin, Alice L. and Mann, Kristine,
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 Smith College Song Book
 Marzo, Eduardo
 2nd Mass in F, op. 29
 3rd Solemn Mass in A, op. 32
 6th Solemn Mass in F Minor, op. 52
 7th Mass in D, op. 69
 Vespers in F Minor, op. 30
 2nd Vespers in C, op. 34
 3rd Vespers in D, op. 63
 Mason, William (1829-1908)
 The Voyage
 Matthews, Harry Alexander (1879-1973)
 The Conversion
 The Slave's Dream, A Choral Ballad
 A Pageant of Easter
 The Song of America, An Historical
 Pageant
 Mayhew, Grace
 The Singing Leaves
 Mietzke, George A.
 My God, My God, Why Has Thou
 Forsaken Me?
 Millard, Harrison
 Vesper Service in F
 Miller, Arthur T.
 Christ, The Child
 The Herald Star
 Mosenthal, Joseph (d. 1896)
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 Mueller, J. Max
 Mass in F + parts
 Nevin, Ethelbert (1862-1901)
 Captive Memories, A Song Cycle,
 op. 29
 Nevin, George Balch (1859-1933)
 The Incarnation
 Norris, Homer Albert (1860-1920)
 Nain
 Noyes, Charles F.
 The Village Blacksmith + parts
 Owst, Wilberfoss George (1861-1928)
 The Message of the Winds
 Paine, John Knowles (1839-1906)
 Phoebus Arise, op. 37
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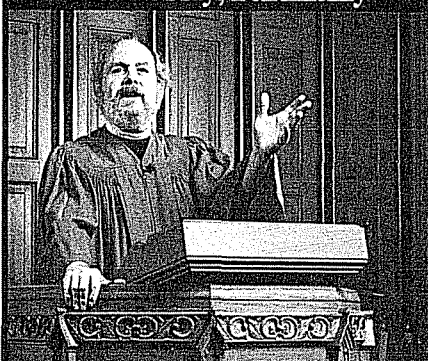
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