

*Arabesque (for violin and piano; Version 2) (ca. 1933)*

Edward Joseph Collins, composer

Notes by Jon Becker, Collins project editor

In early October 1925, Chicago Symphony Orchestra's Concertmaster Jacques Gordon and composer/pianist Leo Sowerby performed *Arabesque* on a New York City recital. This is the only documented performance during Collins's lifetime.

Violinist Frank Almond and pianist Jeffrey Sykes recorded a different version of *Arabesque*, which was described in the liner notes by music writer Erik Eriksson as follows:

A charmingly accessible, gracefully crafted piece, *Arabesque* represents Collins in a vein one might comfortably call late Romantic. The principal violin theme flows smoothly in waltz time over an arpeggiated accompaniment, mostly within the span of an octave, and finishes with a gentle sixteenth note lift, as if to invite the listener to remain engaged. The music then moves into 4/4 meter (*animato*) as the accompaniment is measured out in rolled eighth note chords. The violin rises fitfully before moving into a short cadenza that precedes return to *tempo primo*. In this second statement, the intensity is elevated as the violin breaks into octaves for emphasis. At its completion, the incisive pulse of the *animato* section is heard again in the accompaniment, gradually slowing to a *moderato tranquillo*. Instructed to play *dolce espressivo*, both players slow to a softly suspended ending.

Eriksson's words are also apt for this second version *Arabesque*, despite subtle differences in piano voicings, chordal structures, and inner voice rhythms.

Some may hear in Collins's *Arabesque* a "Celtic tinge" that perhaps reflects the composer's Irish-American heritage.