

VOLUME I

Music of Edward Joseph Collins

Variations on an Irish Tune and other works ■ Earl Wild, piano

Allegro piacevole ■ The Manhattan String Quartet

Tango (in Form of a Rondo) and other works ■ Gunnar Johansen, piano



Edward J. Collins ■ *An American Composer*

BY ERIK ERIKSSON

Composer and pianist Edward Joseph Collins was born on 10 November 1886 in Joliet, Illinois, the youngest of nine children. After early studies in Joliet, he began work with Rudolf Ganz in Chicago. In 1906, Collins traveled with Ganz to Berlin, where he enrolled in the *Hochschule für Musik* in performance and composition. Upon graduation, he made a successful concert debut in Berlin, winning positive reviews from several critics.

When Collins returned to the United States in the fall of 1912, he toured several larger Eastern cities, again winning strong reviews. After serving as an assistant conductor at the Century Opera Company in New York, he traveled again to Europe, to become an assistant conductor at the Bayreuth Festival, a position cut short by the outbreak of World War I.

During that war, Collins rose from Private to Lieutenant. He served as an interpreter, received a citation for bravery, and entertained the troops as pianist.

Upon return to Chicago, he began a career in teaching, joining the faculty of the Chicago Musical College. He later married Frieda Mayer, daughter of Oscar Mayer.

Collins had co-authored *Who Can Tell?* in Europe near the end of WW I; the operetta was enjoyed in Paris by President Wilson. Collins continued composing on return to the USA. Two compositions submitted to a Chicago competition in 1925 were among the finalists, one the outright winner. Both works attracted the attention of Frederick Stock, Music Director of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Stock conducted the first performance of 1914 (later re-titled *Tragic Overture*) and, eventually, many of Collins's subsequent orchestral compositions as well.

Collins died on 1 December 1951, leaving an oeuvre comprised of ten major orchestral works (including a symphony, two overtures and three suites), three piano concerti, *Daughter of the South* (opera in one act and two scenes), *Hymn to the Earth* (for orchestra, choir, and four solo voices), several chamber works, more than 20 songs for voice and piano (four arranged by Verne Reynolds for chamber/string orchestra), and more than a dozen piano solo and duo scores.



Edward Joseph Collins,
in WWI uniform.



Left to right: A government official, tenor Hans Rudiger, pianist Katherine Hoffman (the composer's sister), a reporter, contralto Ernestine Schumann-Heink, Edward Collins, and a tour guide; identification derived from annotations in Hoffman's handwriting on a photo (from her estate). circa 1919-1923, location unknown.

Piano Solo Works

While a student, Collins was exposed to late German Romanticism. Attempts to write music after his arrival in Berlin in 1906 proved a struggle, but he persisted. Despite his Euro-centric training, he moved steadily toward orchestral composition that drew more on his Celtic roots and writing for piano that embraced Americana.

Aside from composition, Collins trained to be a concert pianist and won approving notices for a debut solo recital in Berlin. He also played organ and timpani in concerts. As an organist, he received

praise from Ernest Bloch for his participation in the premier of a major work by that composer.

Collins appreciated the skills needed to be a “jazz” player and once confided to his journal that, had he the chance to begin again, he might choose to become a popular artist like Eddie Duchin.

The longest, most fully developed of Collins’s solo piano works is one derived from the Irish folksong, “O! The ‘Taters over here are small.” Its restless, often reflective character differs from his high-spirited settings of American spirituals, his *Cowboy’s Breakdown* and the varied moods depicted in his five distinctively named waltzes.

The text of “O! The ‘Tater’s” goes:

oh, the praties they grow small over here, over here,
oh, the praties they grow small over here.
oh, the praties they grow small and we dig them in the fall,
and we eat them coats and all, over here, over here.

oh, i wish that we were geese, night and morn, night and morn,
oh, i wish that we were geese night and morn, night and morn.
oh, i wish that we were geese for they fly and take their ease
And they live and die in peace eating corn, eating corn.

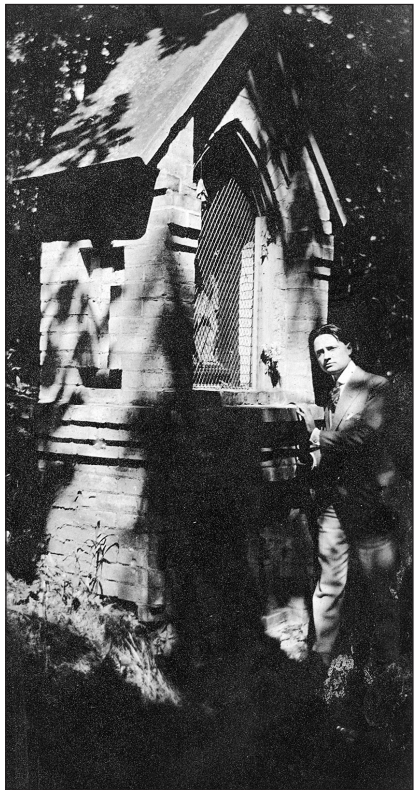
oh, we’re trampled in the dust over here, over here,
oh, we’re trampled in the dust over here, over here.
oh, we’re trampled in the dust but the Lord in whom we trust
he will give us crumb from crust over here, over here.

[The fourth stanza repeats the text of the first. The Gaelic “praties”=’taters = potatoes].

Brian Hart, a researcher at the University of Wisconsin Center for Celtic Studies in Milwaukee, comments:

There are some odd words used in these lyrics that indicate that it was translated from Irish Gaelic into English in America. The use of the word ‘fall’ is an Americanism you wouldn’t find in Ireland. Also, the use of the term ‘corn’ in reference to grain—grain was used to pay rent in Ireland in famine times and was not eaten—gives greater significance to these lines.

Hart states that Collins’s use of this air in his compositions may reflect “pastoral nostalgia, or a romanticism of Ireland and especially the famine, as most Irish-Americans trace their ancestry back to the great diaspora caused by that famine—a sentiment still held onto today.”



Collins, by shrine at Holy Hill, Wisconsin, 1920s.

Collins's first use of this tune appears to be the orchestral work *Irish Rhapsody*, which—according to the composer's journal—was written in 1927 for a performance by the orchestra of the Chicago Musical College (where Collins was an instructor) at the school's June 20 graduation ceremony. *Hibernia* (*Irish Rhapsody*) may be the “Irish Variations” mentioned by Collins in his journal in early 1929. The composer was working diligently to finish the work for a contest sponsored by the Hollywood Bowl. *Hibernia*, then, is likely the composer's revisitation of his *Irish Rhapsody*.

On 29 November 1929, Collins wrote in his journal, “Am a fair way to finishing a little piano piece—a transcription of an Irish tune. The achievement is not great but when a man is dying of thirst, a glass of water will save him.” Two months later, Collins played the set of piano variations for a colleague who liked some, but criticized others. In his journal, the composer wrote:

I cannot expect unqualified admiration from a colleague, especially one who objects to “hardness” in the leading of voices. Unless he can analyze every chord he is dissatisfied, and besides he cannot stand “empty” intervals. Oh well, I shall go over them again and when I polish them to the point where I am satisfied, then the professor can go to the devil.

In January 1932, Collins noted in his journal that he was still attempting to find time to com-

plete the orchestration of *Variations on an Irish Tune*. This appears to be the orchestral work eventually titled *Variations on an Irish Folksong*.

Although Collins made extensive use of “Oh! the ‘Taters” and composed his orchestral works with a pervasive Celtic melancholy, he did not sentimentalize the Irish or even regard them as altogether admirable people. On St. Patrick’s Day, 1939, the composer wrote, “I have had several very disagreeable encounters with Irishmen. The Irishman is by nature ‘tough;’ he is not warm-hearted as people think but of course he is loyal to the church in all its phases...” Collins concludes his entry by noting his inability to “appreciate love of country or love of God. I believe that the world will not be a beautiful place until men and women save their love for each other.”

The sixteen variations in this piece are well-contrasted, diatonic and pentatonic passages countered elsewhere by elaborate chromaticism, simplicity balanced by richer textures.



On Easter Sunday 1939, Collins wrote in his journal, “In the morning finished ‘Didn’t My Lord Deliver Daniel’ (The other day I bought an amazing collection of Negro spirituals and am going to make piano pieces of them).” Eventually, he set three more.

From Collins’s journal entry of 28 June 1939, there is this entry, one that reveals a good deal about the pianist/composer’s latter-day thoughts on programming as well as concerns about his perceived conflict between performing and composing:

My summer recital took place this afternoon; I played Beethoven Op.2, No.3, the Moscheles and Fetis Etudes of Chopin, La Vallee des Cloches by Ravel, Dance by Hindemith, and my own “Didn’t My Lord Deliver Daniel” and Nocturne, and Gershwin’s Rhapsody in Blue. It was a nice cool afternoon; it had rained most of the morning and I was discouraged thinking of the people staying away or arriving, soaking wet and steaming up the hall, but about one o’clock the sun broke through and by three everything was fine and dry. The theatre was filled with a very musical and appreciative audience and I was in fine form, having prepared the program perfectly. After the concert Frieda and I went to the Pizzeria and celebrated by having beer and spaghetti. After such a successful appearance I am very unhappy because I like my piano playing for the moment and regret having given it up for my composition. On such an occasion I always realize that it is the piano which has stood between me and my conducting and between me and my creative work through which I could have saved my soul.”

Later in the same entry he writes:

I think I am the first person to have played Beethoven and Gershwin on the same program.



Collins, with wife Frieda (Mayer) Collins, 1920s.

finds Collins in his most rhythmic mode. The vitality of the piece is infectious, the harmonizations bold and appealing. In three parts (marked “pretty lively,” “songlike” and “pretty lively” again), it dances by in little more than two minutes.

Tango is a languid take on the usually sultry Argentinean dance suffused with suggestive chromaticism and structured as a rondo, second form (A-B-A-C-A). *Passacaglia*, written in the 1920s, does not, except for the final variation, hold the more distinctive tonal language that would flavor the composer’s later work.

Some of my more serious colleagues chided me for the desecration, but I think I am justified considering the present popularity of jazz and the season of the year.

The following day, Collins writes with disgust about a review of the concert:

Saw one notice of yesterday’s concert. It was written by a young lady pianist and was unfavorable. She criticized me for my flawless technic “which separates me from my listeners.” Having heard her once I can say that my technic certainly separates me from her. One of the joys of playing in public is the critic who unsuccessfully tries to be a performer.

Of Collins’s three other pieces based on spirituals, *Lil’ David Play on Yo’ Harp* also soon followed the composer’s acquisition of his anthology, while *The Gospel Train* and *All God’s Chillun’ Got Wings* were completed in 1947 and 1948, respectively. All are imaginative, energetic, and highly developed treatments of straight-forward themes.

Cowboy’s Breakdown was completed in 1938 and

Of the five waltzes included on this disc, four were written in 1922 and are listed as parts of the composer's Opus 18, *Six Valses Caractéristiques*. Each amply fulfills the promise of its title. Each exhibits both a late-Romantic expansiveness and a striking measure of craftsmanship. *Valse Eccentrique*, likely Collins's final work, teems with near-atonality and wildness, its missing downbeats sounding eccentric indeed.

Allegro piacevole

(from *First String Quartette in D minor*, uncompleted)

The only complete movement of Collins's projected First String Quartet (twenty-six bars of a slow movement also exist), this composition was dated 1935 but likely was revised in 1949. During his studies in Germany, Collins told of writing songs as early as 1907. While a 25 April 1909 letter to his family revealed that he was composing a string quartet, Collins's style had evolved significantly by the 1930s, so the *Allegro piacevole* was likely either significantly revised or newly composed. Its flowing but harmonically complex polyphony demands that players pay close attention to their intonation.

—ERIK ERIKSSON, ANNOTATOR

The Young People's Society — again

Just now we are a little in debt. We have placed pews in our church and there is about \$150.00 owing. To reduce this we have arranged a

GRAND CONCERT

something unusual and worth your attention

The Zedeler Trio, Miss Elizabeth Swanstrom, reader and Mr. Fred. O. Fredrickson will appear

You know about the Zedeler Trio. Nicoline and Nicolai Zedeler, violin and violoncello, are in a class by themselves—and Master Edward Collins, their pianist, is fit company.

You know Miss Swanstrom, also, a graduate of the Columbia School of Oratory—she has toured successfully. She is graceful, original, very interesting and satisfying.

Mr. Fredrickson is a member of the quartette of the University of Chicago Church. His voice is a tenor of great compass and resonance and he sings with marked expression.

The concert will occur on the evening of

Wednesday, October 26th, 1904. at 8 o'clock
at the **MESSIAH EVANG. LUTHERAN CHURCH**
Cor. of School Street and Seminary Avenue

Of course—we want everybody to attend. You will be repaid. Nothing else, occurring on the 26th of October will be half as good as our concert.

TICKETS 25 CENTS

Poster, for Collins's performance with violinist Nicoline Zedeler and her brother cellist Nicolai, Joliet Illinois, 1904.

Historic Recording by Gunnar Johansen

The composer's biographer Erik Eriksson has written: "In 1933, Collins had moved his studio to the American Conservatory of Music where he remained on faculty until the time of his death."

Founded in June 1886, the American Conservatory ranked among the oldest music schools in the U.S., and some decades ago stood comparison with institutions such as Curtis Institute of Music, Eastman School of Music, Peabody Institute, and Boston Conservatory of Music. During Collins's tenure on the faculty, the American Conservatory was housed in the ten-story Fine Arts Building, on Michigan Avenue, across from what is now Millennium Park. Also known as the Studebaker Building, it was declared a Chicago Landmark in 1978 and is on the U.S. National Register of Historic Places.

To commemorate the 6 May 1977 dedication of Collins Hall in the American Conservatory, Chicago, an album titled Edward Collins (LP 7051 N7) was released. One side of the LP held a performance of Collins's *Concertpiece* (*Concerto No. 2*), in one movement, recorded live at an August 1956 concert. Mayne Miller was the soloist for this track, with Thor Johnson conducting the Peninsula Music Festival Orchestra. The performance was recorded in Fish Creek, near the composer's summer home and studio in Door County, on the peninsula that is known as Wisconsin's "thumb."

The other side of this non-commercial recording held the Gunnar Johansen performances included on this CD. Little is known about the production of the *Edward Collins* LP, but Johansen had a rather good recording facility at his home in Blue Mounds, Wisconsin (thirty-five miles west of that state's capital, Madison), so perhaps he recorded his tracks there.

Of the American Conservatory, Eriksson also wrote: "This once venerable institution has experienced some unfortunate times in recent years, and records of Collins's work and accomplishments there are, sadly, available only in sketchy form through outside sources." Indeed, in 1992, a pile driven near the Chicago River resulted in flooding of many downtown basements, including that of the Studebaker Building. Some Collins papers stored there were, along with many other water-soaked documents from nearby buildings, cryogenically preserved and placed in a warehouse somewhere in Chicago. What remains of the American Conservatory is now located in Hammond, Indiana.



Chicago's Fine Arts Building,
home of the American
Conservatory of Music
during Collins's faculty tenure.

—JON BECKER, ANNOTATOR

Earl Wild, pianist

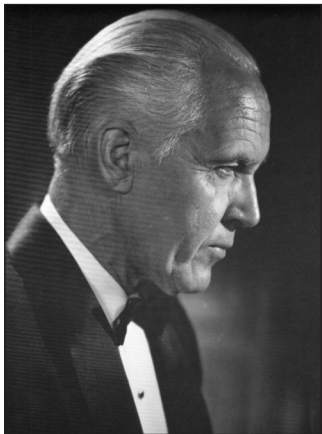
Earl Wild is one of the last in a long line of great virtuoso pianist/composers. Often called a “supervirtuoso” and “one of the 20th century’s greatest pianists,” Wild has been performing for over seven decades. He was born on 26 November 1915 in Pennsylvania and began piano studies at the age of three. When Wild was fourteen years old, Otto Klemperer engaged Wild as pianist for the Pittsburgh Symphony. The recipient of numerous awards and honors, including the Liszt Medal, he has made regular concert tours throughout North America in recital and as soloist with symphony orchestras. Wild was a member of the Juilliard School piano faculty for ten years and Distinguished Artist-in-Residence at Ohio State University. He holds the distinction of being one of the most recorded of pianists, with more than 31 concertos, 14 chamber works, and over 350 different solo pieces in his discography.



Collins's hands, with score, 1940s.

Manhattan String Quartet

Formed in 1970, the Manhattan String Quartet is part of a much older tradition that dates back to the 1930s. The original quartet was led by violinist Rachmael Weinstock and disbanded prior to World War II. Three decades later Eric Lewis became Mr. Weinstock's student at the Manhattan School of Music and re-envisioned the quartet for a new era. Today's quartet is described by the Boston Globe as a “national treasure” and has performed across the United States, Mexico, and Europe. The quartet has been in residence at Music Mountain Chamber Music Festival, Western Connecticut State University, Cornell University, Colgate University, the Manhattan School of Music, the Corfu Festival in Greece, and the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes in Mexico. Their concerts are aired frequently on national radio and television and they have maintained a large, eclectic discography.



Gunnar Johansen, piano

One of the most remarkable figures in twentieth century music, Gunnar Johansen was born in Copenhagen on 21 January 1906. He lived in the United States from 1929 until his death in 1991, producing a giant legacy of performances, recordings, compositions and scholarship. Johansen was also dedicated to the ideals of humanity and the integration of knowledge for the benefit of humankind.

Johansen was a superlatively gifted pianist. He studied in Copenhagen with the important pianist and conductor, Victor Schioler. At age 14, in 1920, Johansen traveled to Berlin to complete his education. Upon the recommendation of Edwin Fischer he was admitted to the *Hochschule für Musik* in Berlin. Johansen was soon welcomed into the highest circles of musical life. His contact with Egon Petri, disciple of the enigmatic, mystical composer and pianist Ferruccio Busoni, proved the most important.

After concluding his studies, Johansen performed throughout Europe and then settled on the west coast in the Bay Area. For five years he broadcast weekly recitals for NBC Radio in San Francisco and appeared as soloist with such important conductors as Bruno Walter and Pierre Monteux.

During the 1930s, Johansen performed a series of historical recitals—twelve concerts in four to six weeks (from memory)—covering the entire range of keyboard music from the early Renaissance to the 20th century. These marathon events were presented in San Francisco, Berkeley, Chicago, New York, Stockholm, and the University of Wisconsin–Madison, among other sites.

In 1939 Johansen joined the faculty of the UW–Madison as the first Artist-in-Residence in Music in America. The relationship with the University lasted until Johansen's retirement in 1976; he was ever grateful for the opportunities and freedom the position afforded him. Beginning in 1950, Johansen embarked on recording projects which were to produce 140 albums, including the Complete Keyboard works of Bach, Busoni, Liszt, Friedman and works drawn from the Historical Recital Series and his own compositions. These recordings are available (on LP or audiocassette) through the Gunnar and Lorraine Johansen Charitable Trust, James P. Colias, Trustee.

Johansen's achievement is gradually being re-evaluated and his legacy expanded. For updated information, please visit: GunnarJohansen.org.

Tragic Overture

21 August 1926; *New York College Great Hall; New York City, New York, USA*

Frederick Stock, conductor; New York Philharmonic orchestra

... introduced to the audience two novelties by American composers. The first, a tragic overture, "1914." By Edward Collins of Chicago, won the first prize at the North Shore Festival competition. It was his first orchestral work to be heard in this city. Mr. Collins composed the overture with a lively memory of the emotions created by the great war. He succeeds in creating by his orchestration the feeling of horror which overwhelmed the world when it began to realize what had happened. No work, musical or otherwise, not even the magnum opus of a genius, could compass all that happened in that fated "1914." But it says much for Mr. Collins's imaginative powers that he stirred that he stirred the remembrance and evoked the poignancy of regret that accompanied that dread event. —Unattributed, *New York Times*

Concert Piece in A minor (Concerto No. 2)

03 December 1931; *Orchestra Hall; Chicago, Illinois, USA*

Edward Collins, piano; Frederick Stock, conductor; Chicago Symphony Orchestra

... splendor in its imagery, and a faun-ish hint of capricious gaiety and something gallant that captured fantasy in terms of modern melody This was exciting music which beguiled instant attention, juggled rhapsodically with brilliance and mounted triumphantly to the urgent demand for crisp, magnetic climax. It was a first performance worth treasuring, for unquestionably it is destine[d] to occupy a gracious niche in the literature of the orchestra." —Claudia Cassidy, *Chicago Sun-Times*

Tragic Overture

15 May 1994; *Carnegie Hall; New York City, New York, USA*

Dennis Russell Davies, conductor; American Composers Orchestra

... a well-made melodrama ... celebrates more modern calamity than Romantic tragedy. ... Cinematic may be the best word for this music. Its methods are efficient, its tone theatrical and its language easily grasped. —Bernard Holland, *New York Times*

Suite for Violoncello and Piano

3 November 2002; *Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall; New York City, New York, USA*

Walter Preucil, violoncello; William Koehler, piano

... The Suite is a substantial piece in four contrasting movements, well-written for the instruments, clearly structured, and skillfully composed in its own distinctive voice. Edith Eisler, *New York Concert Review*

Tragic Overture

8-10 October 2004 (*three performances*); *Lighthouse; Poole, UK*

Marin Alsop, conductor; Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra

... it is not surprising to find German late-Romanticism casting its shadow over his music, though there is also an

individual voice that is hard to describe—the themes ... call no other composer to mind. ... he does conjure up impressive atmosphere. ... in the mid-1920s ... its apocalyptic opening and yearning motifs must have made a startling impression. ... The scoring, for full orchestra including piano, is rich. —John Allison, *The Times* (London)

***Concerto No. 3, for Piano
with Orchestra Accompaniment, in B Minor***

1~3 April 2005 (three performances);

Boettcher Concert Hall; Denver, Colorado, USA

William Wolfram, piano; Marin Alsop,

conductor; Colorado Symphony Orchestra

... a distinctive sound of his own. ... striking orchestrations and the intricate, oft-changing interplay between soloist and orchestra. ... An ardent champion of Collins, Alsop led a powerful, eye-opening performance. ... William Wolfram ... proved to be an enthusiastic partner, deftly shaping its voluptuous contours and handling the considerable complexity of the solo part with ease.

—Kyle MacMillan, *Denver Post* (3 April 2005)

Mardi Gras

4 March 2006; Fox Cities Performing Arts Center;

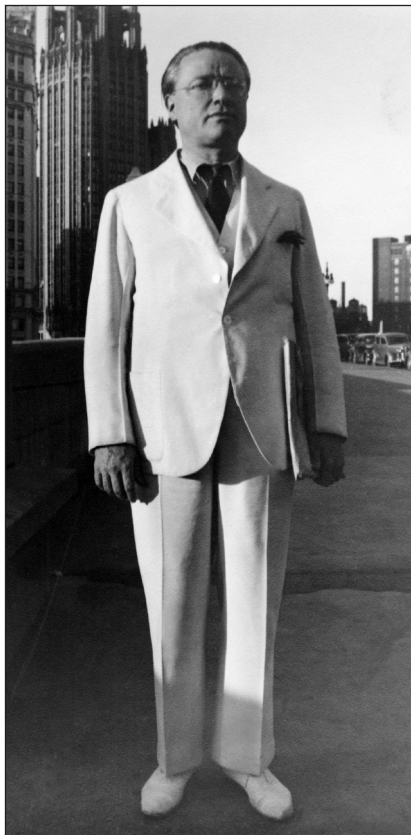
Appleton, Wisconsin, USA

Brian Groner, conductor; Fox Valley

Symphony

... the orchestra provided all the festive energy one might expect. Although this substantial work contained plenty of sonic splash and humor, balance was provided by more serious and reflective moments. These rapid changes of mood were negotiated skillfully and the work made a fine impression overall. The music of Midwest native Edward Joseph Collins is currently experiencing an international renaissance ...

—Matthew Michelic, *Appleton Post-Crescent* (5 March 2006)



Vol. II | Albany Troy CD 267

Mardi Gras, Concert Piece in A Minor (Concerto No. 2), Tragic Overture, Valse Elegante

Leslie Stifelman, piano; Marin Alsop, conductor; Concordia Orchestra

... unfamiliar but immediately engaging music, superbly performed and very well recorded. ... even the most dyed-in-the-wool modernist can't fail to acknowledge the charm and unflinching skill of [Collins's] efforts. ... Enthusiastically, even urgently, recommended." —*American Record Guide*

Vol. III | Albany Troy CD 625

Symphony (Nos habebit humus) in B minor, Concerto No. 3 in B minor

William Wolfram, piano; Marin Alsop, conductor; Royal Scottish National Orchestra

... Collins's invention is personal, strong and inventive in its post-Mahlerian Romanticism. ... William Wolfram is a committed and perceptive soloist ... Congratulations to Marin Alsop and the Royal Scottish National Orchestra for such sympathetic and well-prepared performances ... —Colin Anderson, *International Record Review* (March 2004)

... [Concerto No. 3] very passionate, often seething and evoking a struggle. ... moves restlessly forward, always unfolding and surging, often with new episodes. The Symphony in B minor uses a huge orchestra and is based on an angular theme that is noble, suave, and mysterious ... [it] does not yield its treasures right away—particularly the noisy finale—but it rewards repeated listening and examination ... the performances are convincing ... I look forward to more from this series. —Roger Hecht, *American Record Guide* (January/February 2004)

... His music is excellently crafted and highly individual ... a curiously compelling memorability ... a grand arch of sound, gives eloquent evidence of the sure hand of a true symphonist. The performances here sound very assured and sympathetic. In the concerto, William Wolfram makes some ravishing sounds ... Marin Alsop and the Scottish players giving a thoroughly committed and professional account. ... Fine sonics add the finishing touch to a very rewarding release. —David Hurwitz, *Classics Today Reviews*

Collins displayed originality in his musical structures and often incorporated American idioms into his music ... [Concerto No. 3] keeps the soloist very busy throughout, in the style of Rachmaninoff or Tchaikovsky, but is freer in form than those concertos. The symphony—in spite of its quote translating as “all return to dust”—is quite sunny in demeanor and has a rich and flowing bucolic feeling in much of its length. ... Collins is a delightful discovery who bears more attention. ... —John Sunier, *Audiophile Audition* (2009)

Vol. IV | Albany Troy CD 630

Hibernia (Irish Rhapsody), Concerto No. 1 in E-flat Major, Lil' David Play On Yo' Harp, Lament and Jig

William Wolfram, piano; Marin Alsop, conductor; Royal Scottish National Orchestra

... The main entry is the Piano Concerto in E-Flat ... has an attractive tonal beauty, engaging contrasts, wistful melodic phrases, and a soft, candle-like intensity ... a certain lavish precision and fineness of temperament imbues the piece with tender sophistication ... Hibernia [is] lively and full of contrasting moods ... This is a fine introduction to a worthy, unfairly neglected American composer. Marin Alsop conducts with sensitivity, and William Wolfram has the right touch. ... —Haldeman, *American Record Guide* (March/April 2004)

... Hibernia (Irish Rhapsody) is a big, beautiful chuck on late Romantic music ... The large orchestra makes an impressive sound, Collins scores with unfailing brilliance and a keen ear. ... Piano Concerto No. 1 is every bit as successful, particularly its finale "All'Americana" ... well-constructed, thematically memorable piece that most composers would be proud to claim as their own. ... Lovely, vivacious performances (with William Wolfram a confident soloist ...), very well played and conducted, and excellent recorded sound ... neglected but very worthy composer. —David Hurwitz, *Classics Today* (June 2004)

... 'Hibernia' illustrates his mastery of orchestration. ... The big piece here is Collins's First Piano Concerto ... it sounds almost Delian harmonically and in its somewhat elusive form. But in the third movement there are quintessentially American syncopated rhythms. ... There are engaging and memorable melodic ideas scattered throughout the piece. ... Marin Alsop ... conducts the Royal Scottish National Orchestra as if she's known the music all her life. William Wolfram is the fine pianist in the concerto. The recorded sound is warm, spacious, life-like. —Scott Morrison, *Amazon.com*

Vol. V | Albany Troy CD 641

Arabesque, 15 songs, Prayer (arr. for violoncello and piano), Suite for Violoncello and Piano

Patrice Michaels, soprano; Elizabeth Bucchini, piano (songs); Frank Almond, violin;
Parry Karp, violoncello; Jeffrey Sykes, piano (instrumental duos)

... a kind of Midwest Ralph Vaughan Williams ... an exemplar of romantic, tonal tradition, keenly lyrical in manner. ... It is attractive, well-made music ... its long neglect is puzzling. ... songs, sensitively performed by Chicago soprano Patrice Michaels, with Betty Bucchini at the piano. ... More than a few of the songs are perfect little lyric gems. They are set off well by three attractive cello and violin pieces including the 1933 cello suite, a major work our top cellists really should investigate. ... The performances and sound are beyond reproach.

—John von Rhein, *Chicago Tribune*

... The songs are lovely, and Michaels has a warm and feeling way of projecting them. ... Collins is a composer of sensitivity and power. There is a fresh, American flavor to the music ... a 29-minute four-movement suite for cello and piano written in 1933 ... is more rugged than most of the songs, with more dissonant harmonies and more jagged melodies ... it repays study. The performance, by Karp and Sykes, is strong and effective. ...

Arabesque is an attractive four-minute piece, played with aplomb by Almond and Sykes.

—D. Moore, *American Record Guide* (July/August 2004)

Vol. VI | Albany Troy CD 650

Hymn to the Earth, Variations on an Irish Folksong, Cowboy's Breakdown

Jeni Bern, soprano; Jane Irwin, mezzo-soprano; Peter Auty, tenor; Henry Waddington, bass;
Marin Alsop, conductor; Royal Scottish National Orchestra and Chorus

... Emerging podium star Marin Alsop and her esteemed Scottish forces plead an eloquent case for this very enjoyable music. ... the lush and lovely Hymn to the Earth ... fairly brims with music that sounds like it could only have been conceived in natural environs. ... an impressionist, neo-romantic style reminiscent of such English "pastoralists" as Delius, Butterworth, and Vaughan Williams—but with a distinct Yankee twist. His imaginative scoring and sophisticated orchestrations convey his affinity for nature quite effectively. ... savor Collins's orchestral skill and his Irish heritage in his impressive Variations on an Irish Folksong ... sweet, Celtic-hued

melancholia, briefly relieved by a lively dance episode or two and some dramatic passages . . . a string of complex and artfully crafted variations that smack elegantly of Ravel here and there . . . two-minute bonbon called 'Cowboy's Breakdown' . . . bouncy hoedown theme . . . charming and ingenious orchestral effects. . . . Performances are splendid all around. . . . The sound is first-rate; we get full texts and informative notes. . . . an important rediscovery . . . That he has a champion of Alsop's stature is a more important endorsement than mine.

—Lindsay Koob, *American Record Guide* (September/October 2004)

. . . contains an ambitious and very assured choral orchestral work, *Hymn to the Earth* . . . Alsop shapes Collins' familiar-sounding, but unfamiliar music very well and never loses sight of the work's fluid forward trajectory. . . . The soloists in *Hymn to the Earth* do a splendid job, particularly mezzo-soprano Jane Irwin in the alto solo in "Comes Autumn." Dyed in the wool Mahlerians might scoff and say there is no way on Earth an American composer could erect even a little temple worthy of placement alongside the great cathedrals built by Mahler in his *Eighth* and *Das Lied*. If so, they would be missing out on admiring how close Collins came . . . *Hymn to the Earth* is a very serious and substantive effort . . . positive reaffirmation of the world as a living, timeless entity. With any luck, more choral societies and orchestras will adopt Collins' dynamic and highly enjoyable *Hymn to the Earth* for performance, as it has very strong and well-defined characteristics and deserves to be heard. . . . Alsop also helms the two shorter works . . . with confidence and a sense of style. . . . *Cowboy's Breakdown* . . . looks forward to the "vernacular" style of Copland and Roy Harris. —Dave Lewis, *All Music Guide* (2004)

'*Hymn to the Earth*' . . . skillfully constructed . . . memorable moments, as in the beguiling soprano solo in waltz time . . . there is a neat fugal passage toward the end. . . . the remaining pieces on this disc . . . are utterly delightful. Written in 1935, the latter predates Aaron Copland's essays in 'cowboy music,' and is of the same ilk.

—Scott Morrison, *Amazon.com* (2004)

Vol. VII | Albany Troy CD 657

Ballet—Suite: Masque of the Red Death, Irish Rhapsody, Set of Four

Marin Alsop, conductor; Royal Scottish National Orchestra

. . . Good works that deserve a better fate. Fans of Copland, Gershwin or any of the French Romantics will be certain to enjoy this music. . . . The works collected on this recording are easily the equal of Paul Dukas, Henri Duparc, or César Franck. . . . while each of these pieces is easily comparable to other works, they do not mirror their inspirations so closely as to quiet the voice of the composer himself. The *Ballet-Suite: Masque of the Red Death* . . . contains a great deal of energy and metrical complexity that invigorates the work throughout . . . an excellent piece of music. *Irish Rhapsody* . . . is an interesting, energetic tone poem. It prominently features the bassoon and oboe, although strings and harp provide the fundament. . . . There is an energy and freeness that . . . in many ways defines what it means to be an American composer from this period. *Set of Four* . . . are well crafted and entertaining . . . makes fine use of the strings, passing melodic material up and down from cellos to violins and back again. Three of the pieces . . . shine in their brevity. The second movement . . . nearly ten minutes long, allowing a greater expressivity. In presenting these works . . . the Royal Scottish National Orchestra under the direction of . . . Marin Alsop does the listener a great service. Under her baton these works truly come to life. The recording is technically quite nice . . . Generally speaking, this is a solidly produced recording. . . . These are good works which deserve a better fate than they have so far been given.

—Patrick Gary, *MusicWeb International* (January 2005)

... a very good, unjustly neglected composer whose music would add luster to a few latter-day Chicago Symphony concerts (anybody from the Ravinia Festival reading this?)... the Masque of the Red Death Suite... is the most substantial work here... Collins has a deft ear for orchestration... a pleasantly tuneful, polished effort at light Orientalism, sensual but only up to a PG rating... The Irish Rhapsody of 1927 reminds me of Morton Gould. It's a splendidly orchestrated set of variations... The 'Set of Four' consist of four brief but richly colorful, evocative orchestral pieces... adding up to nearly 20 minutes of aural pleasure... Conductor Alsop and the orchestra seem so remarkably at home and well-rehearsed... The recorded sound... spacious, clear, and solid.

... an unexpected, pleasant, and relaxing indulgence. —Hansen, *American Record Guide* (November/December 2004)

Boy is this sexy!... Masque of the Red Death gives Strauss' Salome a very good run for its money in the decadence department... over-the-top late-Romantic extravagance... Collins' music is wonderfully lush and beautifully scored... Set of Four is... harmonically rich, opulent, sophisticated music composed by an artist with a sure sense of style and (what's even better) a good sense of timing... All of these works deserve to be played and savored by music lovers... Marin Alsop gets very impressive results from the Royal Scottish National Orchestra... these performances do the composer proud, and they are extremely well recorded.

—David Hurwitz, *Classics Today* (July 2004)

Vol. VIII | Albany Troy CD 1086

Piano Trio (Geronimo), Op. 1; Songs; Piano solo works (eleven)

Julie Albers, violoncello • Patrice Michaels, soprano • Anna Polonsky, piano •

Arnaud Sussmann, violin • Jeffrey Sykes, piano

... This eighth volume in Albany's exemplary series features a varied selection of his distinctive and beautifully crafted chamber music. —*New Classics*

The Piano Trio... is the major work on the disc... most appealing and significant addition to the piano-trio repertoire... mastery of both form and content. It is superbly played... One cannot listen to several of the solo piano pieces... without hearing echoes of Brahms's late piano pieces, with perhaps a bit of an overlay of Debussy. The concluding two tracks, however—Joshua Fit de Battle ob Jericho and The 5:48—are of a rather different musical persuasion... their spiky jazz rhythms and sharp dissonances suggest that Collins was by now in thrall to Gershwin, Prokofiev, Stravinsky, and perhaps even Bernstein's 1944 ballet, *Fancy Free*... well worth acquiring... Recommended. Jerry Dubins, *Fanfare Magazine*, (22 Oct. 2009)

... [Collins's] music could be described as tonal, lyrical, impressionistic, rhapsodic, and occasionally with an American flavor. This disc contains... most prominently his Piano Trio, Op. 1... in four movements. I. Allegro non troppo... soon develops into a sprightly allegro that reminds one perhaps of some early English impressionist music by, say, Frank Bridge... Most impressive (and longest) of the piano pieces is 'Nocturne'... 'June Night'... is wreathed in impressionistic harmonies. Scott Morrison, *Amazon* (27 May 2009)



THE MUSIC OF EDWARD

VOL. I ALBANY TROY CD 1156

Earl Wild, piano • Manhattan String Quartet

Variations on an Irish Tune (for piano solo)

Piano solo works (twelve)

Allegro piacevole (for string quartet)

Previously released as CRI CD 644 *Romantic Music of Edward Collins*,

and re-released as New World Records CD NWC644; piano solo compositions released originally on American Metaphore label.

Gunnar Johansen, piano

Piano solo works (six)

Previously released on the American Conservatory LP *Edward Collins* (Chicago)

VOL. II ALBANY TROY CD 267

Concordia Orchestra • Marin Alsop, conductor

Tragic Overture

Mardi Gras

Concert Piece (Concerto No. 2), in A minor (Leslie Stifelman, piano)

Valse Elegante

VOL. III ALBANY TROY CD 625

Royal Scottish National Orchestra • Marin Alsop, conductor

Concerto No. 3, in B minor (William Wolfram, piano)

Symphony in B minor (Nos habebit humus)

VOL. IV ALBANY TROY CD 630

Royal Scottish National Orchestra • Marin Alsop, conductor

Hibernia (Irish Rhapsody)

Concerto No. 1 for Piano, in E-flat major (William Wolfram, piano)

Lil' David Play on Yo' Harp

Lament and Jig

VOL. V ALBANY TROY CD 641

Frank Almond, violin • Elizabeth Buccheri, piano (songs) •

Parry Karp, violoncello • Patrice Michaels, soprano •

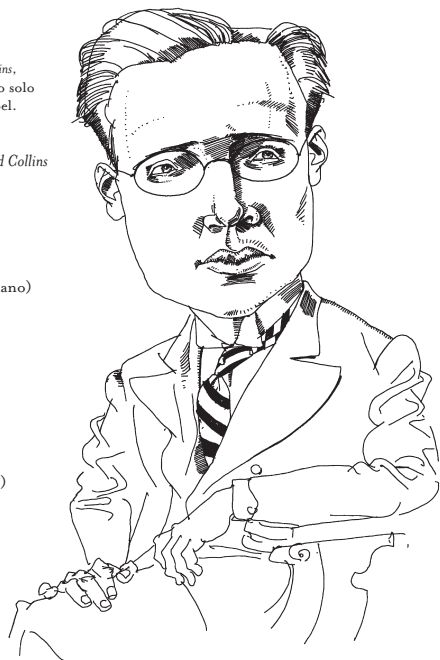
Jeffrey Sykes, piano (instrumental duos)

Arabesque (for violin and piano)

Songs (fifteen)

Prayer (for violoncello and piano)

Suite for Violoncello and Piano



JOSEPH COLLINS

VOL. VI ALBANY TROY CD 650

Royal Scottish National Orchestra • Marin Alsop, conductor

Hymn to the Earth

Jeni Bern, soprano • Jane Irwin, mezzo-soprano • Peter Auty, tenor • Henry Waddington, bass • RSNO Chorus

Variations on an Irish Folksong

Cowboy's Breakdown

VOL. VII ALBANY TROY CD 657

Royal Scottish National Orchestra • Marin Alsop, conductor

Ballet—Suite: The Masque of the Red Death

Irish Rhapsody

Set of Four

VOL. VIII ALBANY TROY CD 1086

Julie Albers, violoncello • Patrice Michaels, soprano • Anna Polonsky, piano • Arnaud Sussmann, violin • Jeffrey Sykes, piano

Piano Trio (Geronimo), Op. 1

Songs

Piano solo works

VOL. IX ALBANY TROY CD TBA (to be released in 2010)

Royal Scottish National Orchestra and Chorus • Marin Alsop, conductor •

Lisa Milne, soprano (Mary Lou Randolph) • Andrea Baker, mezzo-soprano (Esmerelda) •

Peter Auty, tenor (Robert Warren) • Peter Coleman-Wright, baritone (Col. Edmond Randolph) •

Roland Wood, baritone (Confederate Sergeant) • Keel Watson, bass (Jonah)

Daughter of the South (opera, in one act and two scenes)

VOL. X ALBANY TROY CD TBA (to be released in 2010)

Patrice Michaels, soprano • Arnaud Sussmann, violin • Anna Polonsky, piano

Sonata Op. 2/14 (for violin and piano; first movement only)

Arabesque (for violin and piano; alternate version)

Variations on a Negro Theme (for piano solo)

Variations on an Irish Theme (for piano solo)

Piano solo works (two)

Songs from the operetta Who Can Tell? (two)

William Browning, piano

Six Valses Caractéristiques, Op. 18

Released previously on the CD *William Browning: A Legacy of Recordings* (Deerfield, IL)

It is anticipated that the above recordings and additional materials will be released as a complete recorded anthology, in 2011. With support from the Recording Program of the Aaron Copland Fund for Music, from the George L. Shields Foundation, and from the Eugenie Mayer Bolz Family Foundation. Music Engraving by Thomas Godfrey, C-U Music Prep [cumusprep@charter.net] The Newberry Library (Chicago) is the archive for the original scores, journals and memorabilia of Collins. For further information: EdwardJCollins.org.

Edward Joseph Collins

Composition dates enclosed in brackets are drawn from a catalogue prepared in the 1990s by the composer's daughter, Marianna. Dates in parentheses are drawn from source scores or from the composer's journals.

| | | | | |
|---|--|-------------------|-------------|-------|
| 1 | Variations on an Irish Tune Negro Spirituals | [1931] | (1930-31) | 15:22 |
| 2 | All God's Chillun' Got Wings | [1945] | (1948) | 2:17 |
| 3 | Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel? | [1946] | (1940) | 2:17 |
| 4 | Lil' David Play On Yo' Harp | [1945] | (1940) | 3:41 |
| 5 | The Gospel Train: Git on board, lil' chillen Six Valses Caractéristiques, Op. 18 (selections) | [1946] | (1947) | 2:02 |
| 6 | Valse Pensive (No. 5) | [1922] | (1922) | 3:43 |
| 7 | Valse Romantique (No. 3) | [1924] | (1922) | 3:15 |
| 8 | Valse Limpide (No. 4) | [1922] | (1922) | 2:40 |
| 9 | Valse Héroïque (No. 1) | [1922] | (1922) | 3:14 |
| 10 | Valse Eccentrique | [1949] | | 3:40 |
| 11 | Cowboy's Breakdown | [1943] | (1938) | 2:23 |
| 12 | Tango (in Form of a Rondo) | [1940] | (1938) | 4:04 |
| 13 | Passacaglia | [1933] | (1926) | 2:34 |
| Earl Wild, piano | | | | |
| 14 | Allegro piacevole | [1935; rev. 1949] | (1909-1935) | 7:31 |
| from <i>First String Quartette in D minor</i> (uncompleted) | | | | |
| Manhattan String Quartet: | | | | |
| Eric Lewis and Ray Lewis, violins; John Dexter, viola; Judith Glyde, cello | | | | |
| Six Valses Caractéristiques, Op. 18 (selections) | | | | |
| 15 | Valse Héroïque (No. 1) | [1922] | (1922) | 2:43 |
| 16 | Valse Élégante (No. 2) | [1922] | (1922) | 3:01 |
| 17 | Valse Limpide (No. 4) | [1922] | (1922) | 2:13 |
| 18 | Valse Capricieuse (No. 6) | [1922] | (1922) | 2:17 |
| 19 | Tango (in Form of a Rondo) | [1940] | (1938) | 3:46 |
| 20 | Cowboy's Breakdown | [1943] | (1938) | 2:33 |
| Gunnar Johansen, piano | | | | 75:17 |
| Total time | | | | |

All music BMI

TROY1156 [DDD]



ALBANY RECORDS US
915 BROADWAY, ALBANY, NY 12207
TEL: 518.436.8814 • FAX: 518.436.0643
ALBANY RECORDS UK
BOX 137, KENDAL, CUMBRIA LA8 0XD
TEL: 01539 824008
www.albanyrecords.com



Edward J. Collins at Holy Hill in Wisconsin, 1920s.

Graphic Design
by **Pjbf Design**,
Madison, Wisconsin
Cover art by **David Grah**
Northport, Michigan
Collins portrait drawing
by **Joseph Ciardiello**,
Milford, New Jersey.
Johansen biography by
Gordon Rumson.
Special thanks to
Marianna Collins,
Verna Fina, and
Hudson Fair



WARNING: COPYRIGHT SUBSISTS IN ALL RECORDINGS ISSUED UNDER THIS LABEL

© 2010 ALBANY RECORDS • MADE IN USA

Edward Joseph Collins

| | | |
|----|---|-------|
| 1 | <i>Variations on an Irish Tune</i> | 15:22 |
| | Negro Spirituals | |
| 2 | <i>All God's Chillun' Got Wings</i> | 2:17 |
| 3 | <i>Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel?</i> | 2:17 |
| 4 | <i>Lil' David Play On Yo' Harp</i> | 3:41 |
| 5 | <i>The Gospel Train: Git on board, lil' chillen</i> | 2:02 |
| | <i>Six Valses Caractéristiques, Op. 18</i> (selections) | |
| 6 | <i>Valse Pensive</i> (No. 5) | 3:43 |
| 7 | <i>Valse Romantique</i> (No. 3) | 3:15 |
| 8 | <i>Valse Limpide</i> (No. 4) | 2:40 |
| 9 | <i>Valse Héroïque</i> (No. 1) | 3:14 |
| 10 | <i>Valse Eccentrique</i> | 3:40 |
| 11 | <i>Cowboy's Breakdown</i> | 2:23 |
| 12 | <i>Tango (in Form of a Rondo)</i> | 4:04 |
| 13 | <i>Passacaglia</i> | 2:34 |
| | Earl Wild, piano | |
| 14 | <i>Allegro piacevole</i> | 7:31 |
| | from First String Quartette in D minor (uncompleted) | |
| | Manhattan String Quartet: Eric Lewis and Ray Lewis, violins; | |
| | John Dexter, viola; Judith Glyde, cello | |
| | <i>Six Valses Caractéristiques, Op. 18</i> (selections) | |
| 15 | <i>Valse Héroïque</i> (No. 1) | 2:43 |
| 16 | <i>Valse Élégante</i> (No. 2) | 3:01 |
| 17 | <i>Valse Limpide</i> (No. 4) | 2:13 |
| 18 | <i>Valse Capricieuse</i> (No. 6) | 2:17 |
| 19 | <i>Tango (in Form of a Rondo)</i> | 3:46 |
| 20 | <i>Cowboy's Breakdown</i> | 2:33 |
| | Gunnar Johansen, piano | |
| | Total time | 75:17 |

AMERICAN METAPHORE/CRI 644: PIANO COMPOSITIONS • Producer: Michael Rolland Davis;

Engineer: Ed Thompson; **Recorded at:** Home of Earl Wild, Columbus OH, November 1988

CRI 644: STRING QUARTET COMPOSITION • Producer/Engineer: Greg Squires; **Editing/Master:** Squires Productions, White Plains NY **Recorded at:** Rye Presbyterian Church, White Plains NY, 15 March 1986

CRI 644 • Digital Remastering: Tim Tiedemann, engineer; Sony Classical Productions, New York NY, 1992

ALBANY TROY 1156 • Final Mastering: EMI/Abbey Road Studios, London, UK

Project Coordinator: Jon Becker, Arts & Education Consultant, Madison WI, USA (www.ConsultBecker.com)

TROY 1156 [DDD]



ALBANY RECORDS US, 915 BROADWAY, ALBANY, NY 12207

TEL: 518.436.8814 • FAX: 518.436.0643

ALBANY RECORDS UK, BOX 137, KENDAL, CUMBRIA, LA8 0XD

TEL: 01539 824008 • www.albanyrecords.com

WARNING: Copyright subsists in all recordings issued under this label.

An American Composer [1886~1951]

New annotation and art design, as well as the historic Gunnar Johansen performances, distinguish this reissue of a 1992 CD titled *Romantic Music of Edward Joseph Collins* on the Composers Recordings Incorporated label. That CRI CD 644 was itself a reissue of a 1991 American Metaphore CD titled *Edward Collins: Piano Music*, with the addition of a string quartet composition. Born in Joliet, Illinois, Collins studied piano with Ganz in Chicago and composition with Bruch and Humperdinck in Europe. A 1912 Berlin debut and subsequent concerts in the USA and Europe earned strong critical praise. Collins was hired as an assistant conductor for the Bayreuth Festival in 1914, an engagement ended by WWI and service in the US Army. After the war, Collins began a teaching career in Chicago, continuing to conduct, perform, and compose. His music attracted the attention of Chicago Symphony Orchestra Music Director Frederick Stock, who conducted many of Collins's orchestral compositions. Those include a symphony, an opera, three piano concerti, three suites, and two overtures. Collins also composed dozens of songs, piano solo pieces, and other chamber music works.



© 2010 ALBANY RECORDS • MADE IN USA
ALL MUSIC BMI

