

Marlow U3A Music Appreciation Group
July 2010

The Beginnings of American Classical Music



16th Century

16th century onwards: Spanish missionaries to Spain's possessions in the New World teach plainsong Mass settings to Native Americans

1565: Founding of St Augustine, Florida: oldest city in US

1582: Establishment of first English colony in Newfoundland

17th Century

1607: Founding of Jamestown, Virginia: first English settlement on American mainland

1620: Pilgrims sail from Plymouth, England, aboard *Mayflower*; land on Massachusetts coast; found Plymouth Colony

After 1620: Pilgrim Fathers introduce English psalm singing to Plymouth Colony churches

18th Century

1721 (Boston): Revd John Tufts, *A Very Plain and Easy Introduction to the Art of Singing Psalm Tunes*

1759 (Philadelphia): Francis Hopkinson composes song 'My Days Have Been So Wondrous Free'

1767 (Philadelphia): Publication of first American opera: Andrew Barton, *The Disappointment*

1770: William Billings, *The New England Psalm-Singer*

1770: New York premiere of Handel, *Messiah*

1776–1781: American Revolution

1798: Francis Scott Key - *The Star Spangled Banner*

Early 19th Century

Early 1800s: Prominence of English expatriates Raynor Taylor, Alexander Reinagle, Benjamin Carr and James Hewitt

1815 (Boston): Handel and Haydn Society established

1820: Anthony Philip Heinrich, *The Dawning of Music in Kentucky, Op. 1*

Early 1800s: Old American fiddle tunes

1842: Founding of New York Philharmonic Orchestra

The Arkansas Traveller

- ♪ This is easily the oldest piece on this CD, dating from about 1847
- ♪ A farmer is playing the violin on his porch, but knows only the first part of the tune. A passing traveller knows the whole piece, and is invited in for music and refreshment



Mid-19th Century

1850s: Increased controversy over slavery question

1850s: Zenith of Stephen Foster's songwriting career

1853–1869: Louis Moreau Gottschalk tours US and Caribbean - "The first truly American composer"

1854 (New York): Premiere of William Henry Fry's *Niagara* symphony

1861–1865: Civil War in America

1865: President Abraham Lincoln assassinated

Stephen Collins Foster (1826–1864)

♪ The "father of American music", he was the pre-eminent 19th century American songwriter, and the first US person to make a living from publishing songs



♪ These include "*Oh! Susanna*", "*Camptown Races*", "*Old Folks at Home*" ("*Swanee River*"), "*Hard Times Come Again No More*", "*My Old Kentucky Home*", "*Old Black Joe*", "*Beautiful Dreamer*" and "*Jeannie with the Light Brown Hair*"

Louis Moreau Gottschalk (1829-1869): Pieces based on Foster songs

e.g. *Le Banjo* – uses
the *Camptown
Races* theme.

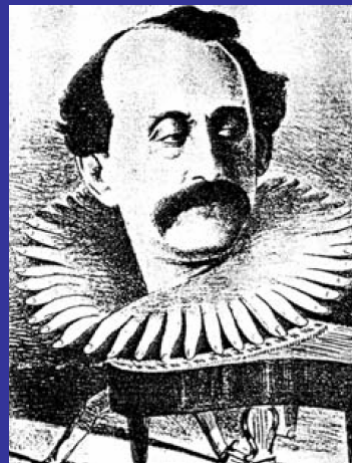
Here is the start of
Columbia, which
uses the *My Old
Kentucky Home*
theme

Both from 1850s



Louis Moreau Gottschalk (1829-1869)

- ♪ Born a Creole in New Orleans
- ♪ His father was born in London and educated in Germany. Mother of French descent.
- ♪ Gottschalk absorbed the latest European masterpieces along with the *bamboula* and slave dances he saw and heard locally



- ♪ The Gottschalks dispatched their son at the age of 12 to study in Paris!
- ♪ His progress was swift, aided by two aunts: the Comtesse de Lagrange and the Comtesse de Bourjally
- ♪ Chopin predicted that he would be “the king of pianists”



- ♪ Gottschalk composed mainly short works for the piano (about 200). These included patriotic fantasies, operatic transcriptions, salon pieces, and the first examples of Creole, Latin-American and Afro-American dance rhythms in European musical form
- ♪ Thus Gottschalk became “**the first truly American composer**”. His works anticipated ragtime by half a century, and the works of Albeniz, Granados and Milhaud.

- ♪ Berlioz wrote: “Gottschalk is one of the very small number who possess all the different elements of a consummate pianist”
- ♪ “Everybody in Europe now knows *Bamboula, Le Bananier, Le Mancenillier* and twenty other ingenious fantasies in which the nonchalant graces of tropical melody assuage so agreeably our passion for novelty”

Gottschalk: *Le Mancenillieur Op.11*

- ♪ A serenade from 1848/9
- ♪ This draws on reminiscences of folk tunes and ballads from his New Orleans childhood
- ♪ In 1853 Gottschalk returned to the United States as a celebrity



Gottschalk: *Polka in B flat*

- ♪ Delightful two-step that could easily be by Scott Joplin



Gottschalk: *Caprice Polka Op.79*

- ♪ This dates from 1856
- ♪ It contains 4 main themes in three different keys



Louis Moreau Gottschalk

- ♪ He lived mainly in South America during the years 1857-1862
- ♪ Returned to New York in 1862, and embarked on another hectic series of tours and recitals throughout the Civil War (95,000 miles and 1,000 concerts)
- ♪ But he had to leave San Francisco in a hurry after a story about him and a young woman led to vilification in the newspapers. He spent the last years of his life in South America.

Late 19th Century

1875: Harvard University appoints composer John Knowles Paine to first music professorship in America

1881: Boston Symphony Orchestra founded

1886: George Whitefield Chadwick's Symphony No.2

George Whitefield Chadwick (1854-1931)

- ♪ 1872 - Organist at Congregational Church in Boston.
- ♪ 1877 - Leipzig Conservatory
- ♪ 1879 - String Quartet - Rip Van Winkle Overture
- ♪ 1897 - Director New England Conservatory



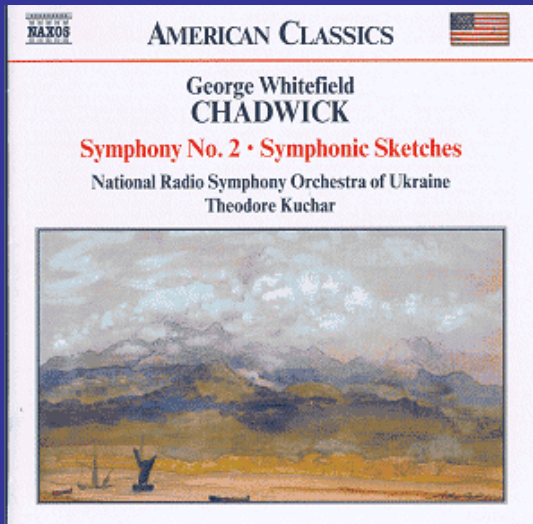
George Whitefield Chadwick (1854-1931)

'Chadwick was undoubtedly America's greatest symphonist between the Civil War and the 1920s'

- ♪ Sym. no.1 in C, 1881
- ♪ Sym. no.2 in B, 1885
- ♪ Sym. no.3 in F, 1894



Chadwick: *Symphony No.2 in B flat* Second movement: *Allegretto scherzando*



Late 19th Century (continued)

1885: Edward MacDowell, *Hamlet and Ophelia*,
Op. 22

1889 (Boston): MacDowell, Piano Concerto No. 2
in D minor, Op. 23

1889 (Washington, DC): Sousa, *The Thunderer* March

Edward MacDowell (1860-1908)

- ♪ **Born in New York**
- ♪ **Left for Paris in 1876 with his mother, to study at the Paris Conservatory. Debussy was a fellow student**
- ♪ **MacDowell was dissatisfied, however, and left in early 1877 for Wiesbaden and then Frankfurt**
- ♪ **Influences include Schumann, Mendelssohn, Raff and Liszt.**

Edward MacDowell (1860-1908)

- ♪ **Sometimes called “America’s first important composer” although the sleeve notes recognise that Gottschalk has a much stronger claim to this title**
- ♪ **MacDowell was, perhaps, the first American-born composer to have his works favourably compared with those of his European peers**
- ♪ **He was idolised in the US in his lifetime.**

MacDowell: *Piano Concerto No.2, Op.23*

- ♪ Composed in 1885, this is “the first major piano concerto by an American composer” and is “one of the finest and most accomplished works of its kind”
- ♪ The premiere was in New York in 1889



MacDowell: *Piano Concerto No.2, Op.23*

- ♪ End of first movement *Larghetto calmato* which surges to a series of crescendos “in the best Romantic tradition”



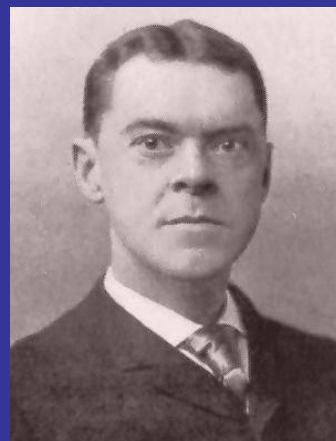
MacDowell: *Piano Concerto No.2, Op.23*

- ♪ Second movement
Presto giocoso
was inspired by Ellen Terry's portrayal of Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*



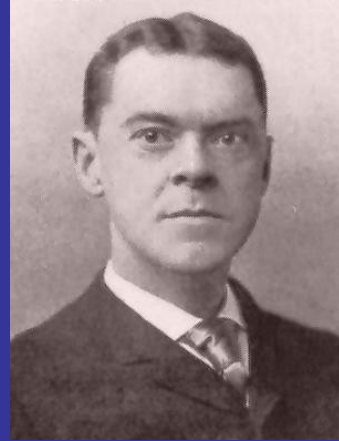
Arthur Foote (1853-1937)

- ♪ First major American composer with no European training
- ♪ Conducted the Harvard Glee Club
- ♪ Awarded first US Masters Degree in music in 1875

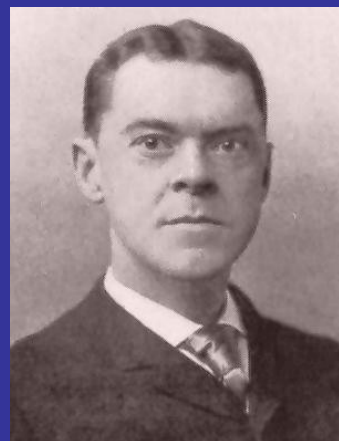
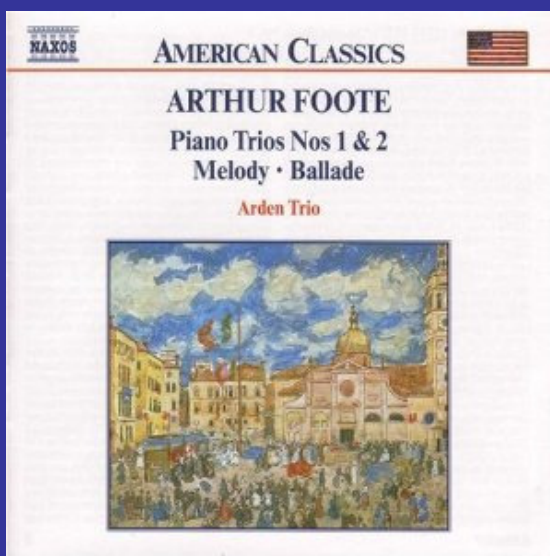


Arthur Foote (1853-1937)

- ♪ Composed many songs and chamber music
- ♪ 1890: composed Piano Quartet in C, Op.23
- ♪ 1899: composed Melody for Violin and Piano



Foote: *Melody for Violin and Piano Op.44*



1891: Chicago Symphony Orchestra founded

1892: Antonin Dvorak arrived to take up a post at New York's National Conservatory of Music

1893: Premiere of Dvorak Symphony 9 *From the New World*

1894 (New York): Victor Herbert, Cello Concerto No. 2 in E minor, Op. 30

1896: Sousa, *El Capitan* (operetta)

1898: Charles Ives, Symphony No. 1

1899: Amy Beach, Piano Concerto

Sousa, *Hands Across the Sea*

Scott Joplin, *Maple Leaf Rag*

Amy Beach (1867-1944)

- ♪ Debut as pianist at 16
- ♪ 1885: Married Dr Beach who restricted her development
- ♪ Self-taught composition and orchestration



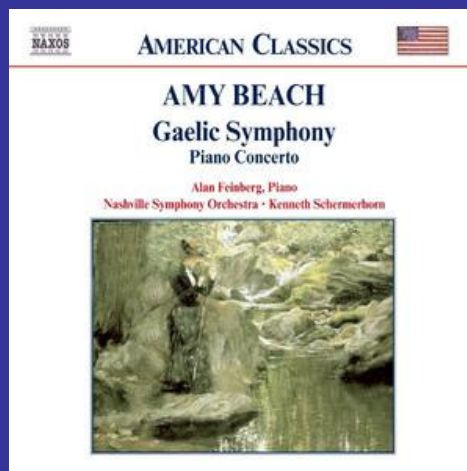
Amy Beach (1867-1944)

Most popular for her songs, and:

- ♪ 1892 *Mass in E flat*
- ♪ 1896 *Gaelic Symphony*
- ♪ 1899 *Piano Concerto in C sharp minor*

Beach: *Piano Concerto in C sharp minor* *Op.45*

Third movement - *Largo*



Scott Joplin: *Maple Leaf Rag*



Sousa: *Hands Across the Sea*

