

Hyde Hall and the Return of the Silver Goddess

February 1, 2021

(COOPERSTOWN, NY) – Hyde Hall has partnered with The Musicians of Ma'alwyck, a Capital Region-based ensemble, to revive early music in its archive. The pair is set to release a CD album of those recordings, titled *Hyde Hall and the Silver Goddess: Operatic Brilliance of Auber, Bellini, Meyerbeer & Rossini from the Drawing Room* on February 26th at 8 pm. That evening, Caffe Lena in Saratoga Springs will host a worldwide release party live-streamed through Youtube—copies will be available that night.

The project began in early 2020, three months before the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, when Ann-Marie Barker Schwartz, director, and violinist for the Musicians of Ma'alwyck, visited Hyde Hall to explore its archives. What she discovered was a trove of rare, early operatic transcriptions. Ann-Marie, along with Sten Isachsen (guitar), and Norman Thibodeau (flute), first intended to host a concert at Hyde Hall. When Covid-19 canceled their plans, they reimagined the project, creating instrumental recordings.

The group recorded works from Hyde Hall's music archive and other collections—including pieces by Auber, Bellini, Rossini, and Meyerbeer. An exciting piece on the album for Otsego County and Central New York is the transcription and reintroduction of *The Otsego Polka*, a captivatingly sweet number, "Composed and Respectfully inscribed to the Young Ladies of Mrs. Cotes' Seminary, Springfield, NY by J.A. Fowler," in 1847.

According to Ann-Marie, "the repertory was instrumental opera transcriptions, with the exception of the charming *Otsego Polka!*" She also remarked that "working in this very special historic site with staff members who are so passionate and committed to Hyde Hall and its story, made the project truly a labor of love for all of us," adding that "the acoustics were warm and detailed." Jonathan Maney, Hyde Hall's executive director, said, "we are thrilled to revive the wonderful music that once filled this house in the 1820s and 30s. Ann-Marie and her ensemble have truly brought this era back to life."

It is because of the wealth of the Clarke family in the 1830s and 40s, that they secured a sizable collection of melodies and transcriptions of popular opera. The family was musical themselves, having owned two pianos, and with many members having studied the flute. It has been over 150 years since these rare pieces have echoed through the halls of the mansion, but now music lovers anywhere can enjoy them, too. Copies will be available for purchase at HydeHall.org or at MusiciansofMaalwyck.org on February 26th.

The event will be live-streamed on February 26th at 8 pm and can be viewed on Caffe Lena's YouTube page (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-q_JzcEasNo). For more information about the Musicians of Ma'alwyck, contact Ann-Marie Barker Schwartz, at annmarie@musiciansofmaalwyck.org or visit musiciansofmaalwyck.org.