

Musical Treasure Chest #22

I was supposed to be doing research at Hyde Hall, but on the drive I was lured away by the sirens of undulating fields of goldenrod, a glorious cloud free azure blue sky, and the warmth of a very late summer day. Hyde Hall is situated in such a beautiful spot on the northern tip of Otsego Lake, with rolling hills, meadows, forests, and vast farmlands; the lovely combination of factors made it so I could hardly bear to go inside the offices to look at old music manuscripts. I hiked around for a while, enjoying the now deserted Glimmerglass State Park and the majestic old trees on the Hyde Hall lawns still fully cloaked in their summer greenery. Further down past the park the meadows were golden with fading crops and a prehistoric heron stood in a beaver pond, warily eyeing me. Climbing a hill I stumbled onto a field that magically melted into the sky. I am not much of a picture taker, but what I was seeing was so gorgeous that I did, and I have included a few of them at the end of this MTC. Pictures can only transmit a one-dimensional experience, truly all of the senses are flooded in nature. The panoply of images, sounds, smells is amazing. If you listen closely you can hear strata of sound: the quiet susurrations of the leaves, the drone of late summer insects (a bit muted now), the percussive punctuated voices of the annoyed squirrel and the frightened bird. Humankind has not yet figured out how to duplicate this, we can only hint at it. Maybe that is just as well...

My research in the musical archives of Hyde Hall was to look for music to play for a short we will film at Hyde Hall in the next few weeks. The Clarke family were active amateur musicians with sophisticated tastes, and their musical binders offer a fascinating glimpse into their pastimes and tastes. Without revealing too much, because I want it to be a surprise, I found exactly the excerpt of music I will need for this musical "short," which will be *scary* for the Hallowe'en season. Hyde Hall has ghosts, many of the staff will attest to seeing them. The site was even featured on *Ghost Hunters* Hallowe'en special in 2013. I can hardly wait to film our short using music from the archives and a very eerie location on the grounds! By the way, Hyde Hall offers *Hyde and Shriek* tours every Friday through Sunday in October. They are great!! If you are out near Cooperstown, this is an event you

should not miss. (Just make certain to reserve a ticket in advance).

So, of course, today's Musical Treasure Chest piece will be a scary one, but one I am hoping that you are not already familiar with: **Andre Caplet's Conte Fantastique**, a work for harp and string quartet based on the *Masque of Red Death* of Edgar Allen Poe. Caplet vividly depicts Poe's unsettling piece, capturing the story very effectively. The version I have included uses a narrator, which I believe enhances the experience. The Israel Chamber Project performance is wonderful, so virtuosic and intense. Enjoy (or perhaps I should say: "be scared, be very scared.....")!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wT0r9ON7yZ0>

