Frederick and Alice Slee: Musical Benefactors



University at Buffalo Music Library Exhibit Curated and written by John Bewley

October 2005



Alice Slee, March, 1908

Frederick Caldecott Slee was born September 25, 1870 in Skaneateles, N.Y. He earned his undergraduate and law degrees at Harvard University and was admitted to the bar in 1897. Mr. Slee returned to Buffalo and had a very successful career as a corporate lawyer. He married Alice MacDonald in 1905. Mrs. Slee was born August 20, 1875 in East Aurora, N.Y.

Mr. and Mrs. Slee were great admirers of chamber music and built a music room in their house at 59 Saybrook Place to accommodate the many chamber music performances they hosted. Frederick Slee



Frederick Caldecott Slee, 1910 Photograph by Nussbaum

was a trained, amateur musician who studied music at Harvard, in New York City, and in Paris. He played as violist in a string quartet that he formed to perform locally in Buffalo and composed more than three dozen works.



Alice Slee, 1908



Charles Augusts (Gus) Collins and Frederick Slee



Frederick Slee in car

Frederick C. Slee Dies at 83: Lawyer, Musician, Yachtsman

Was One of Area's Best-Known Corporation Attorneys, Organized String Quartet Here

Frederick Caldecolt Siee. 83, of Morey and William P. Stewart 59 Saybrook Pl. a musician of onte and for many years one of the Niagara Frontier's best known corporation attorneys, died about 6 o'clock the morning (May 19, 1954) in the Cochrane Nursing

Home. Mr. Sice attained prominence as a corporation attorney during the period of the Frantier's rapid industrial expansion. 'He played several musical instruments, worde numerous musical composi tions and conducted his own string quartet.

Born in Skaneateles Sept. 25, 1870, Mr. Slee later attended Au-born High Schol and then went to Harvard and Harvard Law School. He was admitted to the bar in 1897.

Had Faith in Buffalo

Opportunities to open his practice presented themselves in sev-eral cities, including New York, but Mr. Slee decided on Buffalo because he envisioned a larger law field in view of what ap-peared to be a city with a great industrial future. Time proved his prediction accurate.

He opened an office in the Elli-cott Square Building and prac-ticed there until 1912. When the Iroquois Building was completed that year, he became one of its first tenants.

In 1923 Mr. Slee formed a partpership with John Lord O'Brian
and Dana B. Hellings. Subsequently Ralph Ulsh, William I.

Organized String Quartet 5. 7

He took courses in music t

joined the firm.

Mr. O'Brian went to Washington in 1941 to become general counsel of the Office of Produc-tion Management and Mr. Slee withdrew from active practice that year but continued as coun-sel for the firm, which later be-came known as Hellins, Ulsh, Morey & Stewart.

Businessman's Lawyer"

Mr. Sice was a close friend and attorney of the late William H. Donner, president of the Donner Steel Co., predecessor on the South Park Ave. sile of the Republic Steel Corporation.

Mr. Siee supervised most of the law transactions for the Donner Steel Co. and also handled the law work in New York State for the Henna Furnace Co. and the Donner-Hanna Coke Co. He was a close friend of George M. Humphrey, Immer secretary of the Treasury and head of the M. A. Hanna Co, Cleveland Colleagues, characterized Mr. Slee a businessman's lawyer"—

a man of unerring judgment and keen insight into contracts that presented many ramifications. His high integrity and legal knowhow won him the confidence and respect of associates

In the field of music, Mr Slee was an accomplished plants, vio-

He took courses in music theory and composition at Harvard and later studied at the Sorbonne, Paris. He was tutored by Mme, Madie Boulanger, a famous teacher of music composition.

He organized a string quartet here. He played the viola; the late Isabelie Workman Evans was first, violinist, the late George Kogier was second violinist, and Nicholas D'Addio was cellist. He installed a music room in his home, 59 Saybrook Pl., where

the quartet gave weekly recitals for friends. He wrote several compositions for strings and piano and a few songs.

A member for many years of the Buffalu Yacht Club, Mr. Slee-was a familiar figure on the lakes at the helm of his 46 foot yawl. Althea About 1912, City Judge Willis G. Hickman, then a law student at the University of Buffalo, and the late Philip Catalano, then a clerk in Mr. Slee's law office, made up the crew. Mr. Slee sailed frequently to Long Point for basa fishing.

Monday, May 21, 1956 417 1415

Mrs. Frederick C. Slee Dead; Served Red Cross in 2 Wars

Was the Treasurer of Itome for the Friendless 37 Years; Cited as Outstanding Citizen

Mrs. Prederick C. Slee, 89, one of the Miagara Prontier's musi dedicated Beil Cross leaders and an active worker in other than trable cames, died saturday evepling (May 19, 1988) in her home, 59 Saybrunk Pl.

Mrs. Sice served the Indiata Chapter of the American Bed Cross in two World Wars, com-pilling a second of volunteer effort probably not equaled by anyone eise in this country.

A certificate of appreciation for her services during World War II was given to after See in 1956 by the Ducless of Choucester on behalf of the British Bed Pross Society, which the ducless headed.

In 1952 The Bulfale Evening News designated Mrs. Slee as one of WNY's outstanding citizens.

Home for Friendless Worker

the citation rend;
The citation rend;
"Mrs. Size has achieved discinction in many fields of endeswor, particularly in connection with work for the Buffalo Chapter of the American Red Cross during World Wars I and II, but her sense of social responsibility also shown by her devoted work for the Home for the Friendless, 1500 Main St.

"An examination of the Priendless, 1500 Main St.

"As a member of the board of directors for nearly 40 years and terving as treasurer for more than 25 years, Mrs. Siec, who now is president, has led the way in raising lunds to keep this home for aged women operating in its friendly was." friendly way."

For her services to the Red Cross, the magazine of the Cham-ber of Commerce, Buffalo Busi-ness, October 1946 named her "Frontierswoman."

Organised Knitters

The article pointed out that in the First World War Mrs. Siese had been the chapter's knitting thairman and as such had organ-ted thousands of volunteer workers for the production of sweaters; and other knitted articles for the men in military service.

During World War II, as chairman of production, Mrs. Sies, from October 1930 to January 1946, apparented the preparation at 7,788,778 surgical dressings and 467,294 knitted and anyed articles, Volunteers contributed a total 2,997,910 hunrs of their time of the work. to this work



MRS. FREDERICK C. SLEE

The magazine retation pointed out that Mrs. Siee's work in this respect was "entirely voluntary" and that "only a licrer sense of social responsibility and a fundamental desire to make the fot of the mon in the fighting forces as easy as possible" drave her to such prolonged voluntary effort.

Widow of Atlarney

The chapter recognized her #1 years of service by presenting her a scroll in 1948.

her a scroll in 1948.

Mrs. Slee, who was the widow of Frederick rf. Slee, Buffalo corporation lawyer, was active on the board of the Red Cross until her death and hal served it for more than a quarter-century.

For 37 years, Mrs. Slee had been tressurer of the Home tor the Friendless. She also had served several terms as president. Buting the depression years.

During the depression years, when the home was short of lade, Ara. She would go there, put on an arm and cook meals. She hought neat and other aupulles in quantity and took them

to the home, as well as baskets of Iruit which she bought in the country. She and the home staff. put up hundreds of ears of fruit in Imorn Years.

Mrs. Sice pervad as problem of the Twentieth Century Club in 1937-30. She joined the club July 31, 1917, and also had rerved as a director and on many of its summittees. The club flag today is flying at half-staff in her hunor.

Devoted to Music

Mrs. Sies followed her husband-in death by exsetly two years. Mr. Sies died May 19, 1954. Both Mr. and Mrs. Sies were devoted to music and music causes. Their home routsined a inusic room, where hours of good music were produced by Mr. Slee music were produced by Mr. Slee accomplished pianist, violinist, violist and ceilist.

Mrs. Slee sponsored last September a performance in the University of Buffalo of the Becthoven Cycle by the Budapest String Quartet.

In a joint will, Mr. and Mra. Size directed that the bulk of their estate go to the University of Buffale music department for the presentation of classical arrangements. concerts.

Mrs. Slee was an active mem-

Mrs. Sies was the former Alice MacDonald, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William MacDonald of East Mrs. William MacDonald of East Aurora She was born in the vil-lage Aug. 20, 1875, and altended school there. She later took a business course in Buffalo, where she had lived most of her fife. She was married to Mr. She in 1905.

Memorial services will be con-ducted by Dr. Ralph B. Hindman, minister of First Church, at 2:36 o'clock tomorrow in the chapet. Burial will be in Forest Lawn.

The Slee/Beethoven String Quartet Cycle

The **Slee/Beethoven String Quartet Cycle** is one of the longest-running concert traditions in Buffalo. It was inaugurated by the Budapest Quartet in 1955 and has continued to the present with performances by some of the finest string quartet ensembles in the world. It is very likely the only concert series in the world to present the cycle of Beethoven string quartets on an annual basis.

The series was established by the estate of Frederick Caldecott Slee (1870-1954). Following the instructions in Mr. Slee's will, Mrs. Alice Slee (1875-1956) set up a bequest at the University of Buffalo to fund an annual cycle of six concerts of all the Beethoven string quartets. The bequest also stipulates the order in which the quartets are to be performed.

Slee/Beethoven Quartet Cycle Concert Schedule

Concert 1

Quartet in E-flat Major, Op. 127 Quartet in F Major, Op. 18, No. 1 Quartet in C Major, Op. 59, No. 3

Concert 2

Quartet in E-flat Major, Op. 74 ("Harp") Quartet in G Major, Op. 18, No. 2 Quartet in C-sharp minor, Op. 131

Concert 3

Quartet in D Major, Op. 18, No. 3 Die Grosse Fuge, B-flat Major, Op.133 Quartet in F Major, Op. 59, No. 1

Concert 4

Quartet in F minor, Op. 95 ("Serioso") Quartet in B-flat Major, Op. 18, No. 6 Quartet in A minor, Op. 132

Concert 5

Quartet in A Major, Op. 18, No. 5 Quartet in B-flat Major, Op. 130

Concert 6

Quartet in C minor, Op. 18, No. 4 Quartet in F Major, Op. 135 Quartet in E minor, Op. 59, No. 2

Quartets in order by opus number

"Early" Quartets

Quartet in F Major, Op. 18, No. 1 - Concert 1 Quartet in G Major, Op. 18, No. 2 - Concert 2 Quartet in D Major, Op. 18, No. 3 - Concert 3 Quartet in C minor, Op. 18, No. 4 - Concert 6 Quartet in A Major, Op. 18, No. 5 - Concert 5 Quartet in B-flat Major, Op. 18, No. 6 - Concert 4

"Middle" Quartets

Quartet in F Major, Op. 59, No. 1 - Concert 3 Quartet in E minor, Op. 59, No. 2 - Concert 6 Quartet in C Major, Op. 59, No. 3 - Concert 1 Quartet in E-flat Major, Op. 74 ("Harp") - Concert 2 Quartet in F minor, Op. 95 ("Serioso") - Concert 4

"Late" Quartets

Quartet in E-flat Major, Op. 127 - Concert 1 Quartet in B-flat Major, Op. 130 - Concert 5 Quartet in C-sharp minor, Op. 131 - Concert 2 Quartet in A minor, Op. 132 - Concert 4 Die Grosse Fuge, B-flat Major, Op. 133 - Concert 3 Quartet in F Major, Op. 135 - Concert 6 A November 12, 1954 *Buffalo Evening News* article about the estate of Frederick Caldecott Slee disclosed the financial details concerning the establishment of the Slee/Beethoven String Quartet Cycle and the Slee Professorship in the Music Department at the University of Buffalo.

The first cycle of Beethoven quartets was performed by the Budapest String Quartet beginning in September 1955. The ensemble remained the Slee Quartet-in-Residence until 1965 and served on the faculty of the Music Department. The quartet was also a significant participant in the concerts of the Buffalo Chamber Music Society, performing forty-five times 1931-1965. The Society would have completely cancelled the concert season of 1934-35 due to a lack of the financial means to pay performers. The Budapest Quartet waived its usual fee to give the only performance for the Society that season.





The Budapest Quartet: Joseph Reisman, Alexander Schneider, violins; Boris Kroyt, viola; Mischa Schneider, violoncello

University of Buffalo Treasurer Claude E. Puffer wrote to Mrs. Alice Slee on September 20, 1955 thanking her for the \$4800 check she provided to pay the Budapest String Quartet for the performance of the first cycle

Frederick C. Slee's Estate \$755,324; Concerts Provided

Will Says That Money Is to Go to U. B. After Widow Dies; Classical Music Stipulated

A gross estate of \$755.224.84 was left by Frederick C. Sige, one of the Niagara Frontier's best-known corporation lawyers, a state tax appraisal showed today. Mr. Slee, who also was a musician, died May 19.

The ultimate beneficiary will be the University of Buifalo. The will directs that classical string concerts be provided with a large part of the income.

Mr. Slee left his estate to his 79-year-old widow, Mrs. Alice Slee of 59 Saybrook Pl. Upon her death it will go to the university.

The appraisal report, filed in Surrogate's Court, listed assets as stocks and bonds, \$620,318.78; cash. \$80,731.05; real property, \$48,070, and miscellaneous property, \$6205.

Conducted Own Quartet

Deductions of \$50,317.29 for administrative and other expenses and \$685.83 for debts reduced the net to \$704.341.71. An additional deduction of the charitable bequest to U. B. of \$558.80 was allowed, reducing the net taxable estate to \$148,702.91.

Mr. Slee for years conducted his own string quartets and was a lover of classical music. He provided in his will that when the university eventually gets the estate the net income is to be used to furnish five concerts each year to consist mainly of string quartets, by players who have attained a national or international reputation.

Income also is to be used to employ a musician equal to the high rank of the Paris Conservatoire and master-teacher of harmony counterpoint and fugue.

Excess for Teaching

Also a series of concerts are to be conducted in the Spring or Fall in which quartets of Beethoven shall be alayed by artists of outstanding excellence. To assure music lovers the full enjoyment of these masterpieces, the will directs that breaking into programs with speeches, anouncements or otherwise should be sedulously avoided."

Unexpended income at the end of each three years is to be used by the university's Committee on General Administration for teaching philosophy, history or economics. It is stipulated that no money is to be used on buildings or upon teaching instruments or voice.

of Beethoven string quartet concerts in 1955-56.

BCC: Chancellor Furnas Dean Anderson Dr. Van Arsdale

Professor Baird

September 20, 1955

Mrs. Frederick C. Slem 59 Saybrook Place Buffalo 9, New York

Dear Mrs. Sleet

Thank you very much, indeed, for your letter of September 19 enclosing a check for 34,800 to be used to pay the members of the Budapest Quartette in connection with the series of concerts.

We shall carefully follow your instructions and give to each of the individuals checks in the amount indicated in your letter.

All of the information that I have received about the forthcoming concerts indicates a great success. We are deeply indebted to you for your great generosity in making this outstanding musical event possible at the University. It will bring a great deal of favorable attention to the University and I hope that it will bring you real satisfaction in knowing that you and Mr. Slee have made it all possible.

Cordially yours,

Claude E. Puffer Treasurer

The following quote is from John Dwyer's January 24, 1976 article in the *Buffalo Evening News*, displayed in full below. The article was written in celebration of the 20th anniversary

of the creation of the Slee/Beethoven String Quartet Cycle. The quartet in residence that year was the Cleveland Quartet. Dwyer's remarks are just as appropriate today as when they were written.

"So it will go into the 21st Century and beyond. Nations will fall and rugged monuments will crumble, but the music of Beethoven, ever-fresh and vibrantly alive and exalted, will go on and on."

What Finer Musical Gift?

By JOHN DWYER

Mrs. Frederick Slee was known for her hats. They were apt to be large and elaborate, and in view of any lushion consensus, fearless,

Frederick Slee drove a huge old Buick, and was loth to give it up for any snappy later model. Modern research doesn't establish that he ever did.

Airce Siee was a distinguished-looking woman. More importantly, she was a distinguished woman. Fred slee was a disciplinate woman. It is a sign of the sig Sunday edition. Frederick and Alice, as they say

in modish circles, were well-heeled.

They were also genuinely, deeply devoted to chamber music, especially the exalted quartets of Beethoyen.

Nain from the writer. The annual Ber-chaven Quartet Cycle under the UII Stee Bequest completes its 20th seesson with the performace by the Claveland Quar-ter of Westnessay evening. The produces article, which, will appear in a special principle of the will appear in a special principle of the will be appear in a special day event; reducted and Alto Stee and passed from the seems by the time this cettle article of the Buildo Evening News in 1955. The reminiscences are from friends of this most unusual Buildal couple, and from various prolives.

The Slees had built out a room in their Saybrook Pl. home, very much like a recital salon with performers' platform.

After their many Sunday-morning programs by local and visiting artists, the guests were invited to stay for a "collation." I am told it was possible to smack oneself sumptuously, and de away with Sunday dinner.

Fred Slee, says one informant, played the viola. Another says he played the violin. Both agree it is not a vital distinction, in this particular

a vital distinction, in this particular case.

Mr. Slee was just about equally devoted to sailing, and an assiduous atudent of nagivation. He had a tough time, in fact, deciding whether to give a portion of his fortune to music, or the maritime cause.

But the Slees, bless their spirits, eventually had a vision. They decided to create a permanent monument to Besthoven. Not in marble or in scholarship, but in yearly performance of the music of Beethoven. formance of the music of Beethoven,

formance of the music of Beethoven, Iorever.

In their wills — Fred Siee died first, and Alice Siee further imple-mented the idea — they established the Frederick and Alice Siee

Bequest.

It was given into the care of Cameron Baird, as the director in the 1850s of the modern version of the (then) University of Buffalo Music Department, in a few years it

would become a vitally important part of a State University complex. We call it the UB Sice Bequest, now. It started out, I understand, as not far short of a million dollars, and

THE YIELD from this portfolio was designed to subsidize various kinds of concerts, the prestigous See Professorships bringing significant American composers to Buffale and closest to the Sice hearts, the annual Beethoven Cycle.

In short, all the Beethoven works in short, all the sectioner works in quartet form, in an explicit program order outlined by the Slees themselves, in six programs within each calendar year. And, in the precise wording of the testament, this is to be done "in perpetuity."

How completely, utterly, simply wonderful. What could be more of a Beethoven tribute than the music

They began 26 years ago with the Budapest Quartet, its four members justly claimed by Buffalo as very special and beloved friends.

Violinist Joseph Roisman and Alexander Schneider, violist Boris Kroyt and cellis Mischa Schneider. They were especially close to Cameron and Jane Baird, but it would be hard to ray where they were not warmly embraced as both artists and friends.

The Budapest players, already The Budapest players, already longtime recurring visitors to Buffalo, gave the first Slee Bequest Beethoven Cycle series in 1955 and continued for 11 years until illness halted their accustomed touring.

The Lenox Quartet followed the Budapest in 1966. In the following year the new Guarneri Quartet and

Then came another double bill in 1968, the Juilliard Quartet and the

1985, the Juliana Quarter and the Guarneri.
We see the names Guarneri and Amadeus until the advent of the Cleveland Quartet in 1971, with the Juillard taking two of the six programs.

From there the Cleveland Quar-

From there the Cleveland Quartet, resident UB ensemble and a touring and recording ensemble of the first rank, has presented the entre annual series.

Within days we have learned that the Cleveland Quartet will join the faculty of Rochester's Eastman School next fall. So this 20th anniversary closing concert is their own finale here, for now. Beethoven Cycle performances next season will be performances next season will be shared by the Juilliard Quartet and Tokyo Quartet.

THE EARLIEST pessimism ex-pressed about the Siee Beethoven Cycle is also the most chronic one: How on earth are you going to get an audience for these 17 works, year after year after year?

As they continue annually to sell out, or nearly so, the reason may be clear enough on a little reflection.

The music itself is immortal. A hundred hearings of Op. 132, for in-stance, will not exhaust its continu-ing revelation.

Old-timers look forward to the

recitals as a kind of spiritual home-coming. And there are always new listeners, to be wonder-struck at these masterworks and lured back

again by their endless artistic resource.

The only wonder is whether The only wonder is whether Frederick and Alice Slee knew how far-reaching would be their simple if expensive act of love. They have sent that love of Beethoven down the generations and into the hearts of legions of younger listeners who may be accarcily aware the Slees ever existed.

So it will go into the 21st Century and beyond. Nations will fall and rugged monuments wil crumble, but the music of Beethovan, ever-fresh and vibrantly alive and exaited, will go on and on.

It's one of the grand, delighting jests of a benevolent Fate that a lady known for her hats and a gentleman with a huge old Buick should help

The following string quartets have performed on the Slee Beethoven cycle concerts at the University at Buffalo.

1955-1965	Budapest
1966	Lenox
1967-1970	Guarneri
1971	Cleveland / Juilliard / Guarneri

1972	Cleveland / Juilliard / Guarneri / Lenox
1973-1975	Cleveland
1976	Tokyo / Juilliard
1977	Guarneri / Orford / Rowe
1978	Juilliard / Rowe / Fine Arts / Prague
1979	Rowe / Orford / Amadeus
1980	Guarneri / Rowe / Concord / Fresk
1981	Guarneri
1982	Emerson / Melos
1983	Sequoia / Cleveland
1984	Juilliard / Concord / Vermeer
1985	Emerson
1986	Cleveland
1987	Colorado / Orford
1988	Orford / Lindsay
1989	Colorado
1990	Fine Arts / Muir / New World / Chester / Lindsay /Vermeer
1991	Colorado / Muir
1992	Emerson / Lydian / Chilingirian / Cherubini / Voglar/ Cavani
1993-1994	Muir
1995	American / Manhattan / Takacs

1996	Muir
1997	Arcata / Cassatt / Amernet / Magellan / Brentano / Borromeo
1998-2001	Cassatt
2002	Ying / Alexander
2002-2003	Da Ponte / Endellion / Muir / Colorado / Quatuor Bozzini
2003-2004	American / Muir / New Zealand / Vermeer / Ives
2004-2005	Cassatt / Pacifica / Orion / Cavani / Miami / Daedalus
2005-2006	Muir / Guarneri / Tokyo
2006-2007	Colorado / Avalon / Vogler / Alexander / Ives
2007-2008	Tokyo / Orion / Pacifica / Mendelssohn
2008-2009	Ying / Lydian / Ives / Penderecki / Formosa
2009-2010	Brentano / Daedalus / Borromeo / Pacifica / Miami / Miro
2010-2011	Borealis / Talich / Ysaye / Leipzig / Vogler / Henschel
2011-2012	Jupiter / Borromeo / Ying
2012-2013	American / Jupiter / Bergonzi
2013-2014	Parker / Alexander
2014-2015	Miro
2015-2016	Escher / Jupiter



Frederick Caldecott Slee: Amateur Musician

Frederick Caldecott Slee was more than an avid supporter of the musical scene in Buffalo, he was also an active participant. He, like his contemporary Charles Ives (1874-1954), elected not to pursue music as a profession. However, he was highly trained in composition, theory, and performance with studies at Harvard University, private studies in New York City, and in Paris with Nadia Boulanger. He was an amateur musician in the best sense of the word amateur. He was talented, knowledgeable, and clearly passionate about music.

During the years that Frederick Caldecott Slee attended Harvard and Harvard Law School, he also found time to pursue his musical interests by studying music theory and composition. He wrote in his recollections that he went to Harvard particularly to study with

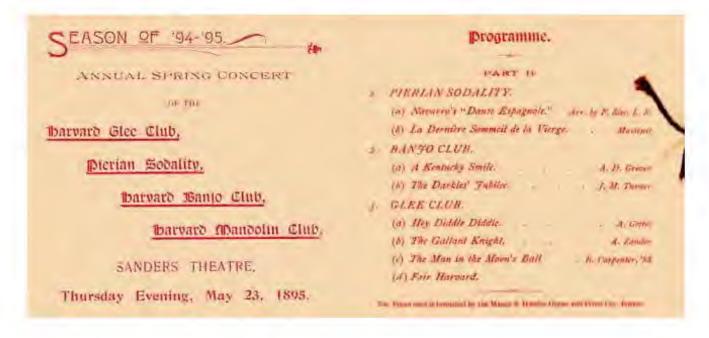
composer John Knowles Paine. The following Boston Symphony Orchestra program for the April 26, 1894 performance at Sander's Theatre at Harvard University was included among Frederick Slee's papers. The program includes John Knowles Paine's composition, *Prelude to "Oedipus Tyrannus" of Sophocles*, op. 35.



Slee performed as violist in the orchestra of the Pierian Sodality while he was a student at Harvard. The Pierian Sodality, precursor of the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra, was established in March 1808 making it one of the earliest orchestras in the United States.



The compositional output of Frederick Caldecott Slee includes several songs, works for string quartet and other chamber ensembles, a choral work, a work for solo organ, and an orchestral work. The Music Library possesses over forty manuscript scores by Slee and one published song. The program for the May 23, 1895 performance by the Pierian Sodality shows what was most likely the premiere of Slee's arrangement of Navarro's *Danse Espagnole*.



Frederick Slee's score of his arrangement of Navarro's Danse Espagnole



Of the four songs by Frederick Caldecott Slee that were published in 1900 by New York music publisher Luckhardt and Belder only this copy of *The Rose* is known to have survived.



The Rose.

Music by Text by FREDERICK PETERSEN. FRED'K CALDECOTT SLEE. Moderato. Voice. cantabile Piano. * Ted. # Led. \$ Led. * Ted. The sweet-est flow'r that blows, I part give you as we ₹ \$%. poco agitato my heart For you is a rose, For me, it is poco agitato





In addition to his studies at Harvard, Frederick Caldecott Slee also studied in New York with Ernest Schelling (1876-1939; pianist, composer, and conductor, best known for his Young People's Concerts of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra 1924–39) and Walter Damrosch (1862-1950; composer and conductor of the Metropolitan Opera and New York Philharmonic). It was Damrosch who recommended that Slee continue his musical studies at the Sorbonne in Paris under Nadia Boulanger.



Program for the Boston Theatre performance of Richard Wagner's opera, Die Walküre by the New York Symphony conducted by Walter Damrosch.



One of the other programs collected by Slee suggests he also attended theater productions in New York City. This somewhat rare program is for a production of *Beethoven: A Dramatic Biography*, by René Fauchois, translated into English by Henry Grafton Chapman performed at the New Theatre in New York City in 1910.



THE NEW THEATRE

BEETHOVEN

A DRAMATIC BIOGRAPHY By RENÉ FAUCHOIS WITH AN ACCOMPANIMENT OF BEETHOVEN'S MUSIC

ENGLISH VERSION BY HENRY GRAFTON CHAPMAN

ACT 1. A PUBLIC GARDEN NEAR VIENNA: ABOUT 1809. ACT II. A ROOM IN BEETHOVEN'S LODGINGS, VIENNA: A FEW YEARS LATER.

INTERMISSION-FIFTEEN MINUTES

ACT III. BEETHOVEN'S ROOMS IN THE OLD HOUSE OF THE SPANISH BLACKFRIARS, VIENNA: MARCH 26, 1827.

CHARACTERS

NAMED IN THE ORDER OF THEIR APPEARANCE

ANTON SCHINDLER MR. J. HARRY BENRIMO

Beethoven': friend

MISS HARRIET BRENT IGNAZ SCHUPPANZIGH MR. JOHN STEPPLING MR. JAMES COOLEY LOUIS SINA MR. HEVLYN BENSON FRANZ WEISS

DOMANOWECZ VON ZMESKALL

The four above members of a string quartette

COUNT VON ARNIM

DESTINA DEPOTATO

MISS DEFECTA WADDEN BETTINA BRENTANO

NTANO MISS REBECCA WARREN
afterwards Countess von Arnim

JOHANN VAN BEETHOVEN MR. FRANK CURRIER brother to Beethoven THERESE VAN BEETHOVEN MISS HELEN TRACY

EETHOVEN

ife to Johann van Beetheven

IONT

MR. FRANK DAWSON BARON DE TRÉMONT MR. FRANK DATES ON MR. ROBERT VIVIAN COUNCILLOR VON PLESS LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN MR. DONALD ROBERTSON

FERDINAND SCHIMON MR. WILFRED REYNIER
a portrait painter

KARL VAN BEETHOVEN MASTER PIERCE MCCLEARY
Beethoven's nephew—as a child
JOHANNA VAN BEETHOVEN
wife to Caspar van Beethoven

CASPAR VAN BEETHOVEN MR. FREDERICK MACKLYN brother to Beethoven

FRANZ HOFFMEISTER MR. FRANK E. AIKEN a music publisher
ARCHDUKE RUDOLPH OF AUSTRIA MR. STANLEY DARK

MR. HENRY F. KOSER PRINCE JOSEF LOBKOWITZ PRINCE FERDINAND KINSKY
GIULIETTA GUICCIARDI

afterwards Countess von Gallenberg

A BEGGAR

MISS GERTRUDE BENNETT

win Gallenberg

MR. ROBERT MCWADE, SR.

NANNY MRS. SOL SMITH

Beethoven's housekeeper
RENNER MR. FRANK E. AIKEN
a musician ANSELM HÜTTENBRENNER

HERR TELSCHER MR. ROBERT VIVIAN

a painter

KARL VAN BEETHOVEN

Beethoven's nephew—as a man

FIRST SYMPHONY

MISS MILLIE HOWARD

MISS BERTHA GRAYLING SECOND SYMPHONY

Program continued on following page

Program continued

THIRD SYMPHONY FOURTH SYMPHONY FIFTH SYMPHONY SIXTH SYMPHONY SEVENTH SYMPHONY EIGHTH SYMPHONY NINTH SYMPHONY

MISS MARIELE BORNEFELD MISS LOUISE SEYMOUR MISS ANNE HUBER MISS MARY KENDRICK MISS KATHARINE FOSTER MISS OLIVE WHITE MISS MARY DUNCAN

SYNOPSIS OF MUSIC

THE INCIDENTAL MUSIC, CHOSEN ENTIRELY FROM BEE-THOVEN'S COMPOSITIONS, IS PLAYED BY AN ORCHESTRA OF FIFTY, CONDUCTED BY MR. ELLIOTT SCHENCK, MUSICAL DIRECTOR OF THE NEW THEATRE.

OVERTURE

(1) OVERTURE TO CORIOLANUS.

DURING ACT I

- (2) MELODY FROM THE SONG-CYCLE "AN DIE FERNE GELIEBTE."
- (3) EXCERPT FROM FIRST MOVEMENT, "MOONLIGHT SONATA" (DEDICATED TO GIULIETTA GUICCIARDI)
- (4) THEME FROM THE ADAGIO CANTABILE FROM THE "SONATA PATHETIQUE."

ENTR'ACTE

BETWEEN ACTS I. AND IL.

(5) FIRST MOVEMENT OF THE FIFTH SYMPHONY.

DURING ACT II.

- (6) THEME FROM THE ADAGIO MOLTO E CANTABILE FROM THE NINTH SYMPHONY.
- (7) CHORAL THEME, "ODE TO JOY," FROM THE NINTE SYMPHONY.
- (8) EXCERPT FROM THE STRING QUARTETTE NO. 9, OPUS

ENTR'ACTE

BETWEEN ACTS II. AND III.

- (9) I. ALLEGRETTO FROM THE SEVENTH SYMPHONY.
- (10) II. LARGHETTO FROM "EGMONT"-DEATH OF CLAIRE

DURING ACT III

- (II) THEMES FROM ALL THE NINE SYMPHONIES.
- (12) CHORAL, "DIE EHRE GOTTES IN DER NATUR."

PRODUCED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF MR. GEORGE FOSTER PLATT

BOOKS OF THE PLAY

Books of the play "Beethoven" containing the Words and the Piano Score of the Music are on sale at the Coat Rooms (ground floor) Price fifty cents.

Scenery by Heinz Meixner and Costumes by Dazian—both from de-signs by Mr. E. Hamilton Bell, Art Director of The New Theatre.

*The Ladies' and Gentlemen's Tea Room on the Foyer Floor and the Men's Smoking Room and Bar in the Basement will be open during the Intermission.

WEBER PIANO USED EXCLUSIVELY

SYNOPSIS OF BEETHOVEN

N THE present dramatic biography (for "Beethoven" does not pretend to be a play in the ordinary use of that word) the author, although he has taken necessary liberties with exact dates and the sequence of events, has been essentially accurate in his portrait of

sequence of events, has been essentially accurate in his portrait of the composer and the characters with which he has surrounded him. Act I. In the First Act the inhabitants of Vienna are rejoicing over the newly regained freedom of their public parks. Among the promenaders are Schuppanzigh, Weiss, Sina and Zmeskall, members of a string quartet who played Beethoven's music regularly under royal patronage. Beethoven's own entrance, denouncing the Emperor Napoleon and explaining his reasons for obliterating the name of Bonaparte from his Third ('Eroica') Symphony is very characteristic, as is the fact that he should address this tirade to a Frenchman and follower of Napoleon. The composer was at this time about thirty-nine years old and at the height of his fame. In the meeting with the Archduke Rudolph and the Princes Lobkowitz and Kinsky with the Archduke Rudolph and the Princes Lobkowitz and Kinsky (all influential patrons of art and devoted admirers of Beethoven) we have an instance of his democratic temper. Something of the lack of harmony between his brother Johann and himself is also suggested, though it is but a hint of the family differences which embittered so

though it is but a hint of the family differences which embittered so many of the master's after years, and there is a glimpse of his little nephew Karl, whom Beethoven loved more than any one else, and for the possession and maintenance of whom he beggared himself in later life. The foreshadowing of the deafness that so tragically handicapped his last twenty years is also shown.

The love story of a great man seems always interesting, and although in Beethoven's case affairs of the heart were so numerous that there is no one particular story, especial moment attaches to his devotion to the young Countess Giulietta Guicciardi. She was far above the composer socially, but appears to have come so near uniting her fortunes with his that Beethoven made actual preparations for the ceremony—the only occasion, in all his many love affairs, when he

her fortunes with his that Beethoven made actual preparations for the ceremony—the only occasion, in all his many love affairs, when he contemplated marriage as an imminent reality. At the last moment, however, the fickle Giulietta was unable to forget her station, and married the Count von Gallenberg. Here the author, by the introduction of a quaint old beggar, suggests that it was because of the lightness of Giulietta's nature that she had refused Beethoven. "Nothing give means nothing have," he says.

ACT II. The Second Act illustrates Beethoven's untidiness, his growing irascibility, his carelessness in money matters, his forgetfulness, his almost prodigal generosity. It opens with an account by his brother of one of Beethoven's concerts, which the composer had conducted, though he could hear but part of the music. His revelation of his growing affliction to his best friend, Schindler, gives a touching hint of what he had undergone in his fervent desire to keep his misfortune to himself. His letters to his few intimate friends show the same sensitive desire to conceal his deafness, the same conviction that he owed it to his music not to let his enemies discover his defect. In same sensitive desire to conceal his deatness, the same conviction that he owed it to his music not to let his enemies discover his defect. In fact, Beethoven supposed that he concealed it much longer than he actually did. The well-known occasion when he had to be turned to face the applauding audience before he knew that they were applauding, although very moving, was not a shock to the public. He had long been known as the "great deaf man," and many went to his concerts through curiosity to see a deaf man conduct.

This second act also reintroduces the Betting Breatness come in the

ceris through curiosity to see a deaf man conduct.

This second act also reintroduces the Bettina Brentano seen in the first act as the inamorata of Count von Arnim. She was a young woman of much charm and intellect, the intimate friend of many famous men, and is perhaps best known as the "child correspondent" of Goethe. Her influence over Beethoven was unmistakable, although the precise nature of his feeling for her is in doubt. The closing incident of the act is not actually historical, although similar scenes seem to have characterized this period of Beethoven's life.

Act III. The interval between the second and third acts was a time of great stress for Beethoven. Although the reputation of his music increased the opposition to it grew in proportion, and it brought in little pecuniary return. His deafness became almost total. He quarreled with almost all his friends, one after another, and his private life was greatly embittered, for, after the death of his brother Caspar, he was involved in a long and acrimonious lawsuit with Caspar's wife for the possession of young Karl, their son, who had been left to Beethoven's care by his father's will. Karl's own dissipations and ingratitude greatly increased the composer's sufferings, while his and ingratitude greatly increased the composer's sufferings, while his frequent quarrels with his brother Johann finally resulted, as described, in the exposure which caused his final sickness. Beethoven died in poverty. His lack of business ability, the diminution of his pension, the expenditures in which Karl involved him all contributed to leave him destitute. The unusual thunderstorm with snow which closes the act actually did occur on the day of Beethoven's death March of Sea in his fifty-separath year. death, March 26. 1827, in his fifty-seventh year

Upon his return to Buffalo, Slee remained active as a violist. He formed the Saybrook String Quartet (taking the name from the location of his house on Saybrook Place) with Isabelle Workman Evans, George Kogler, and Nicholas D'Addio. The quartet performed a series of public concerts for invited guests as well as their regular reading sessions.



Saybrook Quartet in rehearsal in the music room at the Slee residence in Buffalo, circa 1908

Frederick and Alice Slee encouraged feedback from their select audience as evidenced by this typescript list of repertoire and questions about listeners' preferences for the upcoming season. Among the replies are notes from Oscar Silverman (member of the University of Buffalo faculty since 1926, Chairman of the University of Buffalo Department of English 1955-1963, and Director of Libraries 1960-1968) and Grace Capen, wife of Samuel P. Capen (University of Buffalo Chancellor 1922-1950).

Saybrook Quartet list of repertoire with survey questions for audience members

```
Upon our previous programs have appeared the following quartete:
   A BEETHOVEN: 100. 150 Nos. 003 45: 00. 130; 00. 69
      DITTERSDORF: E flat
      FRANCE:
                  Only quartet
      GLAZOUNOW:
                  Op. 15
     VGRIEG:
                  Op. 27
                  Op. 5, No. 3; Op. 74, No. 3
Op. 64, No. 5; Op. 76, No.
      HAYDN:
      IPPOLITON-IVATION: Only quartet
      MEMDELSSORN: Op. 44, No. 1
                  K. 525, 499, 458, Mechtmank, 465
      MOZART:
     TRAVEL:
                   Only quartet
      SCHUBERT:
                  Op. posth, D Minor
                   Op. 41, Ho. 3
      SCHUMARN:
                   Aus meipen Leben
      SMETATAL
1. Should any of these be repeated? If so, which?
 3. Are other works of these componers desired? If so, which?
 3. Have you suggestions as to other composers?
     Should our present group be enlarged) If so, by how many
          and whom?
```

Frederick Caldecott Slee's Writings about Music

Frederick Slee left behind a small number of writings about music, including his program notes for performances by the Saybrook Quartet, a typescript for a lecture entitled *From Wagner to Schoenberg*, and incomplete personal recollections written to be presented as a talk.

From Wagner to Schoenberg (1914)

Slee wrote the lecture *From Wagner to Schoenberg* in 1914. The entire essay is available online. The essay is generally conservative in bent, but Slee also makes some prophetic remarks about Arnold Schoenberg's potential impact on music. This is especially significant since the remarks were written before Schoenberg gained his greatest attention by developing his method of composing with twelve tones. The fact that Slee was already familiar with Schoenberg's music and had expended much thought about it reveals his serious interest in the music of his time and his ability to analyze complex music. Slee made the following statement about Schoenberg's music:

Similarly [to Wagner] Schoenberg is either nothing at all or epoch making. His music is radically different from his predecessors'. If it shall establish itself, then Music has entered upon a new career -- just as with Wagner it entered upon a new career thirty years ago.

While recognizing Schoenberg's potential impact on the musical world, Slee still labels his music as "cacophony". Slee closed his lecture with a performance of an unidentified piano composition by Schoenberg (possibly op. 11 or 19, based on the 1914 date). He prefaced his performance with the following remark:

In the interest of candor it should be said that after repeated playings of these piano pieces I find myself with the uneasy sense that they do contain some design, and plan which I lack the wit to discern.

Program Notes for Concerts by the Saybrook String Quartet (1931-1936)

The length and style of Slee's program notes for the Saybrook Quartet performances suggest that Slee also intended the musical evenings to educate his audiences about a variety of musical matters. For example, there is an entire section of the notes devoted to the characteristics of string instruments and violin makers. It seems likely that Slee created many of the programs with specific topics in mind that could be illustrated through the music to be presented at that concert. One example of this approach can be seen in the following excerpt from Slee's program notes for a Saybrook Quartet performance in December 1931.

Comment was made last month on the shortcomings of the early quartets, and a Haydn was played to exhibit them. Grieg furnishes the horrible example today. Prout used to tell his pupils in quartet writing to "think quartet". Grieg could not think quartet, - he thought orchestra. His picture is too big for its frame. In an effort to get orchestral sonority he has loaded up the four solo instruments with double stopping. The result of pressing down two, three or even all four strings and sounding the notes so obtained simultaneously is not the sonority of a large body of strings such as is found in the orchestra, and less still the sonorities of the wind instruments. Neither is it quartet. Mendelssohn is an offender of the same type. As an illustration may be

mentioned his Third Quartet, characterized by the critics as a symphony in disguise. The fast repeated chords in the second violin and viola, a sturdy bass and a brilliant solo passage for the first violin are in admirable orchestral style, but bad quartet style. "At the fourth bar the ear yearns for kettle drums and horns".

In the program notes of February 1932 Slee discusses the issue of musical development as it applies to different genres of music. The quote below follows a discussion of César Franck's String Quartet and what Slee views as Franck's ability to successfully develop musical ideas over the course of the quartet's movements.

Perhaps this quality of sustained invention is what distinguishes the great composers from the little ones. Hundreds of short-form piano pieces and songs can be cited as works of merit, like the songs of Mrs. Salter, Mrs. Beach, Chadwick, Foote, Payne [i.e. Paine], Augusta Holmes, Guy D'Hartelot. These composers and hundreds of others are able to sustain themselves for a short flight, but confronted with the big frame of the symphony or quartet their imagination falters and the result is either indifferent or bad. Paucity of invention in orchestral composition can be covered by tone color. Chords in wood-wind answered by the horns, oboe and cello duets, will often atone for lack of matter by the sheer beauty of color. In quartet writing any faltering of the imagination is disastrous. The very limitation of the means brings out the matter in bold relief, and no manner of treatment will overcome subject deficiencies.

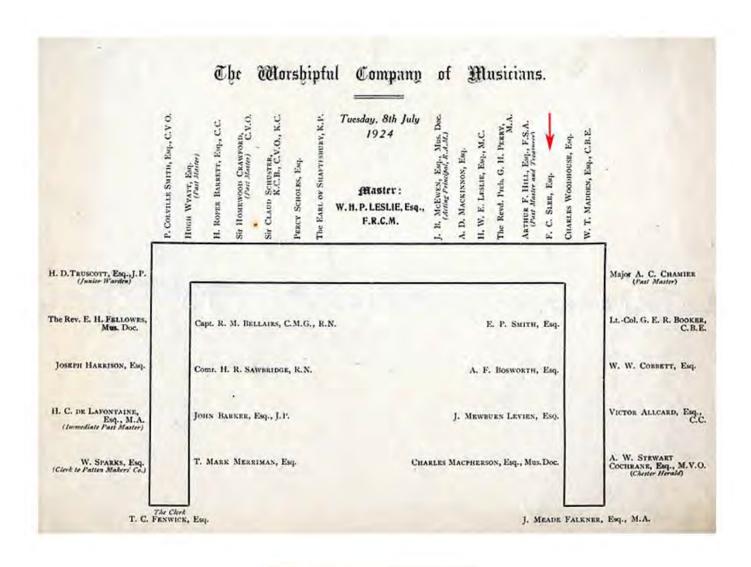
Slee was not reticent to judge the quality of music. In the notes from the March 1932 program he briefly discusses the future of the string quartet as a genre and Debussy's contribution to the genre as compared to that of Beethoven.

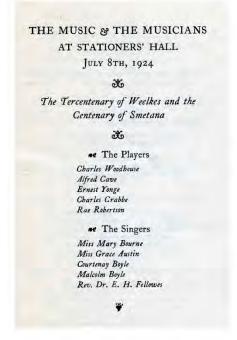
What is the future of the string quartet? Is it a complete and finished thing like the sculpture of Greece and Beethoven its Phidias? The terrific dissonances of modern writers make an effect in quartets foreign to their nature. The very limitation of means and the refinement of this form of music imposes restraints. A cameo requires a fine and delicate tool and may not be fashioned with a smith's maul. It is true that great quartets have been written since Beethoven, -- Brahms's three for example. Then there are the quartets like Debussy's, with its curious fragrance, -- heavy-scented, exotic. There is Ravel. The literature of the quartet would be poorer without Debussy and Ravel. In recognizing their merit can we say they are to Beethoven as beautiful flowers found at the foot of a giant oak?

Frederick Slee's Personal Recollections

An incomplete typescript text contains many of Frederick Slee's personal recollections and views about music. These include his memories of his teachers, John Knowles Paine, Ernest Schilling, Walter Damrosch, and Nadia Boulanger, as well as his opinions about various musical topics. One of the events that Slee wrote about in his recollections was his attendance at a dinner in London given by the Worshipful Company of Musicians July 8, 1924. The Company of Musicians was granted articles of incorporation in 1500 and a Royal Charter in 1604 by James I. The recollection is documented by the invitation to the dinner, the seating diagram showing where Slee was seated, and the program for the night's musical performance.







Slee makes several remarks about the differences between amateur and professional musicians. His opinions of professional musicians provide an interesting commentary on the status and training of professional musicians at the time.

The amateur makes his living in other callings so that music does not completely dominate and absorb him as it does a professional, who commences in infancy and works the live-long day acquiring technical facility. ... Music exacts sacrifices from its professional disciples. They have no time for general education. There are few college graduates among them. They have a child-like attitude towards the world and seem never to have learned to enjoy serious reading.

Slee continues his discussion about the place of music in a productive life with references to Aristotle, William James, and finally this quotation directly related to Slee's own legal career from John Cordy Jefferson's *A Book About Lawyers* (1867):

That the pursuit of harmony is a dangerous pastime for young lawyers cannot be questioned, although a long list might be given of cases where musical barristers have gained the confidence of many clients, and eventually raised themselves to the bench. A piano is a treacherous companion for the student who can touch it deftly – dangerous as an idle friend, whose wit is ever brilliant; fascinating as a beautiful woman, whose smile is always fresh; deceptive as the drug which seems to invigorate, whilst in reality it is stealing away the intellectual powers. Every persevering worker knows how large a portion of his hard work has been done 'against the grain', and in spite of strong inclinations to indolence – in hours when pleasant voices could have seduced him from duty, and any plausible excuse for indulgence would have been promptly accepted. In the piano these pleasant voices are constantly present, and it can always show good reason – why reluctant industry should relax its exertions.

The final impression from Slee's writings is of a man who had made music an integral part of his life. The closing paragraph of the recollections follows Slee's discussion of the importance of music. It reads:

The singer, like a bird, breathes song into the air. No trace remains. It transcends experience. It is impalpable, inexplicable, untranslatable. It has no concrete message for field, counting house or court. Even to its votaries it says nothing that be put in words.

Frederick Slee, the sailor



As noted in his obituary in the Buffalo Evening News, Frederick Slee was an avid sailor. One surviving document of this avocation is a typescript log of a sailing trip made by Slee, George T. Moseley, and Louis Wright Simpson July 11-August 1, 1914. The logbook is illustrated with thirty snapshot photographs. Mr. Slee and his companions left the Buffalo Yacht Club, beginning their trip on Lake Erie. The second day they traveled through the Welland Canal to Lake Ontario. Most of their time was spent sailing the northern shoreline of Lake Ontario. Many of the photographs

show life aboard the Althea: hoisting the sails, cleaning up after cooking, and taking turns at the helm. The first world news the men saw after twenty-one carefree days was the newspaper headline, "Germany Declares War", the beginning of World War I.

The entire logbook can be viewed online at http://digital.lib.buffalo.edu/files/show/16900

The following is a selection of photographs from the logbook.



The Yacht Althea in a lock in the Welland Canal



Cleaning pan onboard the Althea



The Yacht Althea in port



George Moseley and Louis Simpson onboard the yacht Althea



George Moseley onboard the yacht Althea



The Yacht Althea under sail



On the deck of the Yacht Althea



Frederick Slee and Louis Simpson in horse-drawn cart in Bowmansville, Ontario