STEPHEN FOSTER AND AMERICAN SONG

A Guide for Singers

A Document

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ABSTRACT

While America has earned a reputation as a world-wide powerhouse in areas such as industry and business, its reputation in music has often been questioned. Tracing the history of American folk song evokes questions about the existence of truly American song. These questions are legitimate because our country was founded by people from other countries who brought their own folk song, but the history of our country alone proves the existence of American song. As Americans formed lives for themselves in a new country, the music and subjects of their songs were directly related to the events and life of their newly formed culture.

The existence of American song is seen in the vocal works of Stephen Collins Foster. His songs were quickly transmitted orally all over America because of their simple melodies and American subjects. This classifies his music as true American folk-song. While his songs are simple enough to be easily remembered and distributed, they are also lyrical with the classical influence found in art song. These characteristics have attracted singers in a variety of genres to perform his works.
Foster wrote over 200 songs, yet few of those are known. The songs that are known, such as “Beautiful Dreamer,” “Oh! Susanna,” and “Camptown Races,” are incredibly popular, but there are many other songs that are just as worthy of performance. This document discusses the existence of American folk song and the details of Stephen Foster’s life, and also provides a catalogue and performance guide for Foster’s vocal works that contains valuable information for the classically trained singer. This catalogue is meant to bring awareness to Foster’s vast repertoire of songs, and also to encourage more classical singers to perform his works.
I would like to thank my committee members Dr. Wayne Redenbarger, Professor Loretta Robinson, Professor Peter Kozma, and Dr. Robin Rice, for encouraging my passion through insightful questions and conversations on the topic of folk song. It was a true honor to have a committee who participated in the discussion on the topic as if it was their own. Specifically, I would like to thank Dr. Robin Rice for the four years of exceptional vocal training he provided, for constantly encouraging me to keep pursuing my dream, and for always being there as a teacher and a friend. You are an inspiration and I hope to one day become half the teacher, singer, and person that you are.

I would also like to thank my family for their continuous love, and for not questioning my continuing quest for education and knowledge, but instead encouraging me to finish. Also, I would like to thank my husband, Gabriel, who has instilled in me a passion for America and its history, and for being my strength.

Lastly and most importantly, thanks to God for giving us such a wonderful country to live in where we have the freedom to not only listen to the beautiful music of Stephen Foster, but also, for giving us the gift of making music of our own.
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To my grandfather John “Sonny” Smith, who truly lived the American dream by building a successful business and beautiful family through sacrifice, hard work and faith in God.

To my husband Gabriel Miller, whose patriotism, intelligence and faithfulness to the Almighty encourage me daily.

And to my father, Faron Mowery, who is my hero because of the honest, hardworking, and Christian life he has led. Thank you, dad, for not only showing me how I should live my life, but also for all you have done to help me to achieve my dreams.
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INTRODUCTION

I first became interested in the music of Stephen Foster in a seminar class on the history of music in the United States at The Ohio State University, taught by Dr. Charles Atkinson. Dr. Atkinson’s passion about American music taught me to appreciate all genres of American music, and made me curious about the roots of American folk and art song. I was particularly struck by the quantity of songs Stephen Foster produced. It seemed almost unbelievable that such lyrical and melodic songs could make such an impression in the folk-music repertoire, yet be almost completely ignored in the American art-song repertoire. This all led me to research the history of American song and the story of Stephen Foster.

While there are wonderful sources on Stephen Foster’s life, and many publications and reprints of his music, there is not a good source available for singers specifically focusing on the vast song repertoire of Foster. While many of his songs are known and loved, such as “Oh, Susanna!” and “Beautiful Dreamer,” there are many more that are worthwhile, yet not known or performed. This document is meant to bring awareness to singers about the history of American song, as well as the life and song repertoire of Stephen Foster, and to provide a performance guide for those interested in singing his songs.
While Stephen Foster meant for his songs to be performed by the classically trained voice, the folk nature of his songs made them easily adapted into other genres and styles. There are many examples of performers in jazz, country and bluegrass who have adapted his songs, but this document is geared to classically trained singers in order to stay true to Foster’s original intentions.
CHAPTER 1

AMERICAN FOLK SONG: FACT OR FICTION?

America has gone through an identity crisis. Most individuals born and raised in America are descendants of an immigrant family from France, Britain or some other foreign country. Our culture is one derived from many other cultures, which is why it took so long for America to find an identity of its own.

Music in America went through a similar identity crisis. A conductor at the Paris Opera in the mid-nineteenth century once said, “In Europe we look upon America as an industrial country – excellent for electric railroads but not for art.” ¹ Could music be an area in which America has failed to find its own voice? Is there such a thing as truly American folk song?

1.1 Defining Folk Song

Confusion on this topic exists because there is disagreement on the definition of folk song. Some believe that folk songs are those that have been transmitted only through oral tradition instead of being learned from a book or a print. Others say that folk song should not include music sung in a religious venue, as that would classify those pieces as

only hymns or spirituals. There are also definitions of folk song that conclude that almost any type of music can be considered folk song if it can be sung from memory by a community of people, regardless of its compositional history.\textsuperscript{2} If this is the case, the line between folk song, art song, and popular song becomes thin.

A few authorities in folk song believe that oral tradition without acknowledged written notation must exist in order for a song to qualify as part of this type of song. Cecil Sharp, an English folk song collector, believes that anonymous composition and oral transmission are vital components of folk song.\textsuperscript{3} Robert Gordon, who was the founder of the Archive of American Folk Song at the Library of Congress in 1928, writes in a collection of essays published by the National Service Bureau that “folk song is a body of song for generations based by word of mouth, from singer to singer – not learned from book or print. Folk song is not a product of an author. The author may have composed it, but it is not his; he is merely an incident, unimportant and soon forgotten.”\textsuperscript{4} Golden’s description of folk song does not deny that it was “composed,” but merely states that neither the written status nor the author is of importance or even remembered. Golden and Sharp agree that while the original source of a folk song is unknown, there was a compositional process, albeit not one that included known written notation or authorship.

There are other opinions regarding characteristics of a true folk song that further the confusion. For example, folk song is said to lack emotion, descriptive passages, and

\textsuperscript{2} Community refers to a group of people who have similar ideals. This includes racial and ethnic communities, which can explain why Negro spirituals and work songs can be included as folk song.
should not teach any kind of moral lessons. In this respect, religious songs would be excluded, whereas those songs that merely tell a story are accepted. In an attempt to erase this confusion, the International Folk Music Council issued a definition for folk song: “a product of musical tradition” that has survived and evolved over time through the creativity of the people who are adapting it and orally transmitting it. IFMC continues its definition by writing that, although folk song might originate on paper by an individual composer, it must have been absorbed subsequently into the unwritten, living tradition of a community. It is from the printed or published versions of the songs that singers may adapt the text or music over time.

With these varying opinions and definitions comes the evaluation of whether certain songs should be considered part of the folk-song repertoire. Many of the above definitions would eliminate the works of Stephen Collins Foster. By contrast, the IFMC’s definition is so broad that almost anything can be considered folk song as long as it is continued to be adapted and performed.

Though many disagree over how folk song should be defined, there is one specific part of the definition that is agreed upon by most scholars. *Folk song is born of the people and for the people and is passed on by word of mouth from one generation to the next.* This means that a song may be considered folk song whether or not it is published or even altered from the original version in any way. It is from this simple definition that folk song classification and discussion can begin.

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5 Barry Phillips, *Folk Music in America.* New York: (National Service Bureau, 1939, 64).
1.2. A Brief History of Folk Song in America

Folk Song existed in other countries long before it reached America along with other types of song, such as German *lieder* and French *mélodies*. America’s first settlers brought the music and songs of their countries. While cultivated music tradition existed in America, folk song was popular among settlers because it allowed them to relate and share their experiences casually and socially with others. Many of these folk songs, called *Broadside Ballads*, were secular solo songs that told a story. These songs were printed on a single, “broadside” sheet of paper, and distributed. Told in third person, these stories were about outlaws or peddlers, and were composed with a simple melody and text that could be easily changed. Although these ballads were a part of American life, they were of British origin.

Folk song was an important part of daily life as settlers began to establish themselves in this new country. As singing schools were created, newly composed sacred and secular songs became part of American culture, and were heard not only in church or school, but also in the homes of America’s families. New hymns and proper social singing became important parts of the church service. These hymns were composed, they quickly entered the oral tradition because of the faith and gratitude settlers expressed in God for allowing them to be in a new country with new opportunities. The importance of singing in the everyday lives of Americans became

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7 Wiley Hitchcock uses the term “cultivated” to describe the classical music tradition in American History in his book *Music in the United States*. 6
more evident around the time of the American Revolution when songs were created as a consequence of the inspiration and emotion brought on by war. Americans began to see themselves as a new people with common interests, including a desire to be independent from Britain.

One way that Americans expressed their strong emotions during this time was through song. Sometimes they would set new, fitting lyrics to an old, familiar tune. But they also composed new music that was purely American. Some songs were patriotic or humorous to show support for the troops and boost morale, but others were more serious, sharing how the people of America were affected by the war. A few familiar songs from this time in American history are “Yankee Doodle” and “Johnny has gone for a soldier.”

The songs of the American Revolution mark the beginnings of purely American folk song because they are the first songs by Americans about the American lifestyle.

After the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, the American people devoted themselves to creating a strong and successful nation. Because of the high number of immigrants who had come to the new nation after the wars, land was becoming scarce along the eastern part of the country. Families packed their belongings into wagons and set out to find new, undiscovered land to make their own. These pioneers created songs as a way to pass the time and track the events of their traveling. These songs were strophic, and the chorus was often performed by a group. They were shared at social gatherings as a way to retell the events of their journey in an entertaining way. Other

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9 “Yankee Doodle” was actually a folk song that originated in England. During the war, British troops used it as a way to taunt and make fun of American troops in order to distract them. Ironically, Americans turned the situation around and used the piece to make fun of British troops once America saw signs of victory. Verses were changed and added to make it more of an “American” song.
simple songs, such as “Skip to my Lou,” were created on the wagon train in order to entertain the children. Children’s play songs could be sung from memory and shared with friends.

Americans who had settled in different parts of the country were also creating and using folk song as a part of their everyday lives. Singing and listening to others sing had become a part of American society. Americans sang during work, prayer and leisure activities. People would gather together to sing ballads or perform songs that they had composed on their fiddles, banjos or piano to make each other laugh and to enjoy each other’s company. One song that became a favorite was “The Farmer’s Curst Wife.” This piece had a chorus that a group would sing after the soloist sang the verses of the story, which would often be improvised. There were also “courtin’ songs.” They humorously expressed the joys of being in love, but the misery of marriage. “Billy Boy” was a call and response “courtin’ song.” A question was sung by a soloist or group and was answered by a different soloist or group.

Folk songs were also a way for the working man to pass the day. Railroad workers have provided us with an abundance of folk song that even many recognize today. Songs with repetitive phrases were structured to accompany the rhythm of the workers tasks. The shift leader often created or initiated these songs as a way to keep the workers on task.10 These songs would describe their work, tell stories about fellow workers, and express the dangers of their work. “I’ve been working on the railroad” and “She’ll be comin’ ‘round the mountain” were a two such tunes.

The African-American community also provided a large number of songs to the American music repertoire with their own work songs and spirituals. Many of their pieces were based on old American hymns and old British folk songs, but rebuilt to fit their culture.\textsuperscript{11} Like the railroad work songs, these spirituals and work songs were used by slaves to maintain the momentum of the work. When the slaves had time for leisure, they gathered together to sing, dance and tell stories. The songs of this community featured characteristics such as “shout” singing and rhythmic shuffling that did not exist in many songs outside their community.\textsuperscript{12} A few songs that survived outside their community over the years in households today are “Shortnin’ Bread,” “Hushaby,” and “Pick a bail of cotton.” Although the uniqueness of their folk songs and fun-natured activities were not experienced by many people outside their community, those that were exposed to it were inspired by the energy, spirituality, and emotion the songs exuded.\textsuperscript{13}

This inspiration of the African-American folk song led to an entertainment franchise based around their song and humor called “minstrelsy.” The idea of minstrelsy existed in Britain and other counties long before it became popular in the United States. In the beginnings of minstrelsy, the characters were performed by white people with blackened faces, making fun of the African-American culture at first. As the abolitionist movement gained favor, this stopped and African-Americans joined the shows. These minstrel shows began to include non-racial black humor, song and dance, and the use of culture and humor to entertain people in a way that was a more correct portrayal of their lifestyle. One famous African-American folk song composer who

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{11} This continuous circulation and rebuilding of songs such as hymns by other communities in the United States is why this particular type of song can be considered folk song. \\
\textsuperscript{12} This includes both sacred and secular songs. \\
\textsuperscript{13} Forcucci, 192.
\end{flushright}
performed in minstrel shows and wrote songs for them was Dan Emmett. Some of his songs include “Old Dan Tucker,” “Dixie,” and “De Boatman’s Dance.”

Folk songs were the basis of many minstrel shows because they could be easily adapted and easily improvised on the spot. Folk song melodies were short, catchy, and easily remembered, which is why even the newly composed songs of minstrel shows earned a spot in the repertoire of folk song.

1.3 Stephen Collins Foster and the Existence of American Folk Song

Around this time, in the middle of the nineteenth century, Stephen Foster’s songs were becoming popular in households all over the country because of their nostalgic, sentimental and patriotic themes. Foster’s songs were a music that the American people as a whole, despite racial or ethnic differences, could call their own. Because of this, his music became sought after for minstrel shows. Some of his most memorable songs such as “Old Folks at Home,” were performed in the shows, without recognizing him as the composer.

It is with the music of Stephen Foster that the discussion of folk song comes to a confusing halt. Up until this point, much of America’s folk song had been influenced by and adapted from the folk songs from our ancestors of other countries, such as the Broadside Ballads. It was these folk songs that were used in the singing schools and by people at home, and it was these songs that were adapted and used as models by those

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14 Some believe Emmett did not compose “De Boatman’s Dance” and “Old Dan Tucker” but merely adapted them and popularized them.
15 E.P. Christy negotiated with Foster to put Christy’s name as the composer of the pieces for a ten dollar advance per song. Foster was financially broke for many reasons, so this business proposition seemed beneficial at the time, although it later frustrated him. These types of occurrences in Foster’s life lead him to excessive drinking.
settling in new, unexplored land across America. Many of the greatest American art-song composers, such as Aaron Copland and Virgil Thompson, studied in Europe using German \textit{Lied} and French \textit{Mélodie} as influences and models for their pieces. Also, there is no doubt that those American art-song composers who did not study abroad were not strangers to music from other cultures, as they used the works of composers such as Beethoven and Mozart as resources and learning tools.

It is the music of Stephen Foster, perhaps more than any other American music, that supports not only the existence of a distinctly American folk song, but also a distinctly American art song. Although for some scholars, the fact that Foster’s music was published nullifies its classification as folk song, the music was distributed in other ways as well. Foster often personally delivered hand-written, pre-published songs to specific individuals or companies, to be performed before they were published.\footnote{Walters, 62-63.} While this practice was often costly to him financially, and sometimes even deprived him of the authorship, it did allow public performance of these pieces. Many of his songs were retained by the American folk who could relate to Foster’s texts and easily sing his melodies. People would memorize the songs, sing them at home, and share them with others. Examples of songs that have survived the test of time in the homes of America include “Beautiful Dreamer” and “My Old Kentucky Home.” Scholars neglect the folk nature of Stephen Foster’s songs simply because they were published and distributed, although Foster began writing music without the intention of gaining profit or fame.

There are other qualities about Foster’s songs that are characteristic of folk music. The themes of the songs directly related to the emotions and events at that time in
American history. He wrote songs about American war, songs relating to the life of a slave, mourning the death of loved ones, lost love, falling in love, and even politics. Most of his songs are strophic, and many of them feature a chorus intended to be sung by a group, similar to the folk songs of other countries. In fact, Stephen Foster’s music is still performed by a variety of performers in a variety of genres and styles. Some notable musicians who have recorded his music include Allison Krauss, Yo-Yo Ma, Thomas Hampson, Marilyn Horne, and Natalie Cole.

Despite the folk nature of Foster’s music, many of his songs can be considered art song. Foster was primarily a self-trained musician. Apart from a few lessons, he taught himself to play many instruments well. While he did have some assistance from friends his compositional technique was inspired by privately listening and studying the works of Mozart, Beethoven and Weber. While he was known primarily for his black-faced, minstrel tunes, he wrote many lyrical ballads with sophisticated texts similar to the art song of the composers he studied. Some of these, such as “Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair” and “Beautiful Dreamer” were known and sung all over America.

His songs are simple enough for the public to learn the tunes and sing them from memory, yet sophisticated enough for classical performers such as Thomas Hampson and Marilyn Horne to record and perform. Performers have taken his songs and adapted them to fit their performing situation, for example, by omitting harmonized choruses. It is the sophisticated qualities and compositional process of Foster’s songs that make them attractive to performers of art song.

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The life and works of Stephen Foster have been written about by many people. While his music may never be accepted as folk song by some scholars, the fact that his music captured the spirit of the American people is evident in its survival in the ever-changing musical world over the past 150 years.
2. 1 The Birth and Death of Stephen Collins Foster

Stephen Collins Foster was born on July 4, 1826 around twelve-thirty in the afternoon at the Foster family’s white cottage in Lawrenceville, PA. His parents were William Barclay Foster, who was of Scotch-Irish ancestry, and Eliza Clayland Tomlinson, who was of Italian ancestry. This particular day marked the half-century anniversary of America’s independence, and also the death of Thomas Jefferson and John Adams. Stephen’s father was not present during his birth, but was instead aiding the Mayor of Pittsburg, John M. Snowden, in Independence Day celebrations in the city. In fact, around the same time his mother was giving birth to him, the Declaration of Independence was being read at the celebration. Stephen was named for the son of a neighbor and a close friend of his mother’s who had recently died.

Some 38 years later, Stephen Foster died on January 13, 1864 in Bellevue Hospital in New York City. The Foster Hall Collection and Foster Hall Memorial
research provided by the University of Pittsburgh lists the following account of the days prior to Foster’s death:18

January 9th: Stephen returns early to his room at the New England Hotel in NYC feeling sick and weak from a pre-existing fever.

January 10th: Foster faints after rising to get a glass of water. He fell against his washbowl, causing it to break and cut both his neck and his cheek. A hotel chambermaid found Foster lying naked in a pool of blood with not only the cuts just mentioned but a burn on his thigh. George Cooper, protégée of Foster’s, was called and he took Foster to Bellevue Hospital.

January 11th: At the request of Foster, Cooper sends a telegram to Henry Foster saying that his brother is very sick and wishes to see him. The telegram did not get to him until a day after his death.

January 12th: Cooper writes to Morrison Foster at the request of Stephen, not only to tell him that he is sick and would like to see him, but also asking Morrison for some money as his “means are very low.”

January 13th: Stephen dies at 2:30 p.m. alone in the Bellevue Hospital, as Cooper did not come to the hospital on that day.

2.2 Foster’s Personality and Physical Appearance

Stephen Foster’s personality as a child has been described differently depending on the source. His brother Morrison says that he was “not a very methodical student…developed erratic symptoms which ill accorded with the discipline of a school-room.”19 He continues to describe an instance in which his patience gave out during an alphabet lesson, causing him to yelp like an Indian, quickly exiting the classroom, yelling and running all the way home. Morrison also admits that while ill-disciplined in the

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19 Morrison Foster, My Brother Stephen (Indianapolis: Foster Hall Library, 1932), 24.
classroom, Foster was intelligent and able to understand a lesson without much effort, and was perfect in his recitations.

Foster was shy and a bit of a loner as a child. He preferred to be in the woods or in his room alone to study or think. This tendency stayed with him as he aged, even making it difficult for him to be involved in society. He did not like glamorous parties or spectacles and did not care much about money or fame. Despite this, he did have some friends, several of whom had lovely singing voices. Susan Pentland Robinson was a childhood friend and neighbor of Stephen whom he not only dedicated songs to, but also entrusted to sing his songs properly. He also was a member of a small club of friends who gathered at his home. These men were Andrew Robinson, J. Cust Blair, Robert P. McDowell, and Morrison Foster. He described these men and himself in the poem “The Five Nice Young Men.” His friends and family described him as an excellent listener, but when he did talk, he was well informed on every current topic.\(^\text{20}\)

Despite this, Foster’s sympathies were always with the lowly and the poor. Morrison Foster gives an account of a night where Foster dropped everything when he heard of a little girl who had been trampled to death by a dray.\(^\text{21}\) The father of the little girl was a poor working man and a neighbor of Foster’s. Stephen sat with the child’s parents that night in hopes of providing some comfort.

While exact physical descriptions of Foster as a child do not exist, we know that as many young children during this time in history, he was often afflicted with certain

\(^\text{20}\) Morrison Foster, 8.
\(^\text{21}\) Ibid., 36.
illnesses such as whooping cough, sore throats, and spider bites. We do know from family accounts that he was “loved and petted” as the baby of the family.  

It is Morrison Foster who gives us a vivid description of Stephen’s physical appearance as an adult. He tells us that Stephen stood only five feet seven inches and that he was handsome. His short stature was proportioned with small feet and hands, which he took good care of, as they were soft and delicate. Stephen also had what Morrison calls “striking” facial features (i.e., full lips, a straight nose with full nostrils). His most striking feature was his eyes, which were dark and large. His dark eyes were matched by his dark, nearly black hair, which seems to be inherited from his mother’s Italian ancestry.  

2.3 Education

It was incredibly important to Foster’s family that he be well educated. He entered “infant school” at age five, which was conducted by Mrs. Harvey and her daughter Mrs. Morgan. (This is where the yelping Indian incident took place.) In 1834 he entered the Allegheny Academy, which was run by Reverend Joseph Stockton, the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church. Shortly after that in 1837, it is known that Foster went to school with Morrison, studying with the Reverend Nathan Todd, who instructed Stephen in Latin and Greek. Studies with Mr. Todd were successful. The Reverend told Mr. Foster that “Stephen was the most perfect gentleman he ever had for a

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22 John Tasker Howard, 68.
23 Morrison Foster, 8.
24 John Tasker Howard, 73-74.
pupil.” A few years later Foster left with his brother William to attend the Academy of Athens, in Tioga Point, PA. His father was in complete support of this decision, noting “I think it an excellent chance for the dear little fellow to get an education.” Here Stephen was exposed to a variety of courses in music, foreign languages, and natural sciences. He only remained at the academy for a year and a half, and it was clear that he was not happy with his educational situation, spending more time with music than with studying. He wrote to his brother William, “My Philosophy Grammar & Arithmetic not bring enough to keep me going I would ask your permission to Study either Latin or Book-keeping,” and “I will also promise not to pay any attention to my music untill after eight Oclock in the evening.” While this education may not have met the complete approval of the young Stephen Foster, he did compose his first piece, “Tioga Waltz,” while at Athens Academy.

Stephen’s final time of formal education was in 1841 at Jefferson College in Canonsburg, PA, where his grandfather served as one of the first trustees. Foster remained here for only seven days. In a letter, Stephen complains about his inability to get into the classes he wanted, and how the professors did not care if he came to class or not. Instead, Stephen turned to board with his family in Allegheny where he attended “day skool” with Mr. Moody, who was a mathematics teacher. Also, according to his brother Morrison, Stephen studied German and French with Captain Jean Herbst, eventually becoming proficient in both languages. Though there was some talk within

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26 John Tasker Howard, 90.
27 Foster’s spelling, grammar, and punctuation are preserved in these quotes.
his family of the possibility of Stephen attending West Point or some other military school, he did not, and instead became completely involved in his music.

2.4 Musical Inclinations and Training

Many accounts indicate Stephen’s musical tendencies early in his life. When he was two years old, Foster would lay his sister’s guitar on the floor and pick out harmonies from its strings, calling it his “ittly pizani.” Later, around the age of seven, Foster was taken to a music store in Pittsburgh, where he picked a flageolet from the counter, and within minutes played “Hail Columbia!” He had never before played such an instrument. This musical behavior continued, as his mother Eliza wrote to Stephen’s father on May 14, 1832 saying “Stevan…has a drum and marches about…with a feather in his hat, and a girdle about his waist, whistling old lang syne…There still remains something perfectly original about him.”

Just a few years later, Foster and some of the neighborhood boys formed a thespian company. Stephen was their “star” performer. This performing desire is not something that stuck with him in his older years. In fact, he seemed almost insulted when asked to perform for an audience. He later would give his compositions to other people to perform, or would only participate in performance among friends and close family, such as Susan Pentland or Jessie Lightner.

Foster took music lessons from a few teachers, but due to the financial troubles the family was having, the lessons were sparcé. He seemed to need only elementary

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28 John Tasker Howard, 77.
29 Ibid., 78.
instruction to understand the concept of melody and harmony, but continued to study deeply the works of Mozart, Beethoven and Weber.\textsuperscript{30} One teacher who had a great influence of Stephen was Henry Kleber. It is uncertain exactly how many lessons he had with Stephen, but Kleber did help Stephen to finalize the shape of some of his compositions.

While some sources claim that there were few musical activities within the Foster house, the detailed research of John Tasker Howard and Ken Emerson prove otherwise. The Foster family had friends and neighbors who were involved in music both leisurely and professionally. Also, Stephen was not the only Foster child to take music lessons. Charlotte was a fine pianist, who loved music and played at home for personal pleasure. Morrison Foster also tells us that Stephen was exposed to the music of the African-American culture as a child by going to church with one of the Foster’s black servants.\textsuperscript{31}

2.5 Eliza Foster

Eliza Foster was a devoted wife and mother until the day she died on January 18, 1855. She endured many misfortunes, such as a loss of children. Three of her children died before their first birthdays: Ann Eliza, William and James Clayland. (The Fosters paid tribute to Ann Eliza and William by naming two subsequent children after them.) Her eldest daughter Charlotte also passed away of a fever on October 20, 1829.

Eliza also dealt with financial troubles, including the loss of their family home, the White Cottage. There is some discrepancy regarding the exact date when the house

\textsuperscript{30} Morrison Foster, 32.  
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 50.
was lost. The University of Pittsburgh homage to Foster in the Foster Hall Collection states that the cottage was first sold in 1827, forcing the family to move to a home on Walter Street in the city of Pittsburgh. The research of John Tasker Howard tells us that William Foster lost control of the property to the Bank of America sometime after 1830. After this Eliza and her children never had a home to call their own, as they took board in many places in Pennsylvania and Ohio throughout the rest of their lives.

Eliza Foster was an eloquent letter writer. There are many letters in which she writes about her children. She never showed partiality, she worried about their welfare daily, and she always gave her blessing in whatever choices they made. She was a great pen-pal to her absent children, always showing her dedication and yearning for them to return home to her.

Stephen was devoted to his mother. Morrison notes that “his [Stephen’s] love for his mother amounted to adoration. She was to him an angelic creature.” He continues to say that Stephen never once uttered a negative word about his mother, and that his heartfelt feelings for her are expressed in many of his ballads. Because of her devotion to her children, there are many letters about Stephen that refer to her feelings about his musical inclinations, educational situations, or financial difficulties. Some excerpts follow:

May 14, 1832 to William Foster, Stephen’s father:

“Stevan…has a drum and marches about… There still remains something perfectly original about him.”

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32 Morrison Foster, 44.
33 John Tasker Howard, 78, 81, 86, 91, 103.
January 20, 1840 to Morrison Foster, Stephen’s brother:

“Did he [Stephen] get a clarionette? And did you see him when he started – was he well wrapt up?”

February 7, 1840 to Morrison Foster, Stephen’s brother:

“I feel quite contented about Stephen, believe that William will take good care of him.”

August 12-14, 1841 to William Foster, Stephen’s father:

“Stephen will not stay at Cannonsburg – he says he has lost conseat of himself because he was one in his life a great fool…He begs me to ask you to say that he must board with Ma and go to day skool…indeed, if I am in Allegheny Town I shall be almost too lonely without one child with me…”

October 18, 1841 to William Foster, Stephen’s father:

“Stephen and I have the house to ourselves and lonely enough it is…he is not so much devoted to musick as he was; other studies seem to be elevated in his opinion. He reads a great deal and fools about none at all.”

At times throughout Stephen’s adult life, he lived under the same roof as his mother, even as a married man with a family. The financial hardships often left his mother and father dependent on their children for aid, both financially and physically. In a letter to Morrison in October 1854 Eliza writes, “Tell Stephen I hope to find him at home when I come, to help me make it more like one.” Stephen did come home to East Commons with his wife and his child, and he lived there with his mother and father until they both died.

Eliza Foster died on January 18, 1855 at almost 67 years of age. She was walking down Marbury Street in Pittsburgh when she suffered a stroke. Eliza did manage to get herself to the nearest house to ring the bell, but by the time the doctor got there, she had
Stephen took responsibility for the upkeep of his parent’s current residence of East Commons. Eliza’s death affected Stephen greatly, as he wrote many songs about his mother, some celebrating her loyalty and motherly devotion, and others mourning her memory.

2.6 William Foster

William Barclay Foster was a well educated man, as education was of great importance to the Foster family. He attended Canonsburg Academy, which later became Jefferson College, and afterward began his career as a salesman with a merchandise company called Denny and Beelen, earning a respectable amount of money. In 1814 he bought the 23 acres that became the estate on which the “White Cottage,” the future home of his family, was built. Although this is where he built his home, the land he purchased outside of Pittsburgh was intended as a real-estate investment. This plan backfired as he had lost all of the land about 16 years after he purchased it. William also inherited a share from his father’s estate when he passed away.

Because William Foster was a highly patriotic man, he offered his assistance during the War of 1812 as the Deputy Commissioner of Purchases. While he was later acknowledged for his humility and service to the country for helping provide supplies for the war, the endeavor was costly as he used his own funds and was never fully reimbursed by the government. This decision put a financial strain on his family that was never fully recovered. Following this, William tried his hand in a variety of other careers.

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35 John Tasker Howard, 6.
paths, both with the federal and state government. He served two terms in the state legislature, held the position of the Collector of Tolls of Pittsburgh, began a store similar to the one he worked for when he started his career, held a minor position in the Treasury Department in Washington, and was Mayor of Allegheny for two years. Even after all of this he went through some time of unemployment until accepting a position as a Soldier’s Agent in Pittsburgh, where he collected pensions and land grants.

Besides William Foster’s difficultly in finding steady employment, there is also evidence that he had a drinking problem, since he joined the temperance society in 1833. The growing financial troubles not only caused the Foster family to lose their family estate, but also forced them to move three times between the years 1830-1835. The eldest Foster son, William, was often a source of financial relief for the family. This financial struggle is something that affected all of the Foster children at one time or another. For Stephen, this meant the loss of the family piano, music lessons, and dependence on his eldest brother William to pay tuition for his school. Regardless, all of the sons also helped their father in whatever way they could for the remainder of his life.

In William Foster’s scrap book there was a clipping found in an 1830 issue of Gale’s National Intelligencer. In this article the author talks about how music is a “delightful accomplishment,” but that it is torture to “sit with sad civility” and “listen to that disease called a popular song.” The article continues saying “Oh! parents! why will ye…make your daughters learn music as a mantrap whether they have the organ

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36 Ibid., 15.
developed on their pericrania or not? Oh! Satan, what a sad blunderer you were to kill Job’s daughters!”^37

While William Foster acknowledged Stephen’s interest in music, he also expressed his desire for Stephen to acquire a high level of education and earn a respectable living. William mentions this in several of letters.\^38

January 12, 1840 to Morrison Foster, Stephen’s brother.

“We have concluded to let Stephen go with William, who will put him to school at the Academy in Towanda…I think it is an excellent chance for the dear little fellow to get education.”

March 24, 1840 to William Foster, Stephen’s brother.

“I hope [Stephen] is attentive to his studies…Tell him his old Uncle Struthers looks to him to become a verry great man. He says he is confident that he is possess’d of superior talents for one of his age. I hope Stevy will not disappoint the fond hopes of so good an old man.”

September 3, 1841 to William Foster, Stephen’s brother.

“I regret extremely that Stephen has not been able to appreciate properly your generous exertions on his behalf, by availing himself of the advantage of a college education, which will cause him much regret before he arrives at my age…[Stephen] is at school, now with Mr. Moody, a first rate teacher of mathematics in Ptsbg. and it is a source of comfort to your mother and myself, that he does not appear to have an evil propensities to indulge; he seeks no associates; and his leisure hours are all devoted to musick, for which he possesses a strange talent.”

March 14, 1842 to William Foster, Stephen’s brother.

“I wish you could make a target bearer of Stephen, and find emplymt. for him, that you could take him through the summer…He is uncommonly studious at home, but dislikes going to school, he says there is too much confusion in the school. I dislike to urge him, so long as he discovers no evil or idle propensities…”

\(^37\) John Tasker Howard, 79.
\(^38\) Ibid., 80, 90, 94, 106
Even after Stephen began publishing music, he returned home to Pittsburgh after he was married, and lived with his parents on East Commons. Here he not only helped his parents with the up-keep of their home, but also helped his father when he suffered a stroke in 1851 that left him bedridden for the remainder of his life. Stephen continued to visit and care for his father until he died on July 27, 1855.

2.7 Stephen’s Relationship with his Siblings

Stephen Foster loved being at home, wherever the Fosters lived, among his family. Although he was much younger than some of them, he had a close relationship with all of his siblings. Each of his siblings helped encourage and support him in some manner. His desire to be near his family and his home is a theme found in many of his songs.

The oldest Foster son was William Barclay Foster, Jr., was the illegitimate son of William Foster, Sr. It is unknown exactly when he was born, but Ken Emerson suggests in his biography of Stephen that it could have been before William and Eliza were married. The identity of his mother is unknown, and he was left on the Foster’s doorstep around 1815 when he was somewhere between the ages of seven and ten. Eliza immediately took in the child as her own and named him after her infant son she had recently lost in March of 1815.

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39 Emerson, 168-169.
40 This fact was not mentioned in John Tasker Howard’s biography because of a promise made to disclose the information between Howard and Foster’s family.
“Brother William,” as he was called, became successful as an engineer for the Pennsylvania and Ohio canals, and was there to support the Foster family financially when needed. He not only financially supported Stephen on many occasions, but also took Stephen to attend schools outside of Allegheny. While much of this was at the request of his parents, Stephen appreciated Brother William’s financial support and encouragement. This can be seen in a letter written to Brother William on July 24, 1841 while at Jefferson College. “I would only say, wishing you a safe journey home and through life, and that I may some day be fit to render thanks to you for your unceasing kindness to me. I remain your ever grateful and affectionate brother.”

Charlotte Foster and Ann Eliza were very different in personality, but they both encouraged Stephen’s intellect and musical talent in many ways. While Charlotte mostly lived away from home after Stephen’s birth until she died, she was known for her vivacious personality and for her love of music, for she played the piano quite well. Charlotte always asked about Stephen when she wrote home and care for Stephen even though she was not there. Charlotte’s musical inclinations were evident to a young Stephen and he mourned her loss even in his adult life.

Ann Eliza, also named after an elder Foster child who had passed away in infancy, was unlike her sister Charlotte and was very serious-minded. It was Ann Eliza who played a part in tutoring Stephen at an early age, especially when he and Morrison were ill, and not able to go to school. In one letter she wrote to her father, “I employ myself by assembling them together every day and putting them through the usual

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41 John Tasker, Howard, 103.
42 Ibid., 21.
exercises." It is also with Ann Eliza’s guitar that Stephen first showed sign of his musical talent at age two.

Ann Eliza married an Episcopal clergyman named Edward Y. Buchanan, the brother of James Buchanan, the 15th President of the United States. This connection was one that would prompt Stephen to later exude political interest by writing songs for President Buchanan’s campaign.

Henry Foster was not physically close to Stephen, as Dunning and Morrison Foster were, but he did correspond with him and worry over his welfare. Henry was involved politically, like his father, and lived in Washington for almost eight years working as a clerk. After Stephen left Jefferson College, Henry and Brother William corresponded over a possible future for Stephen in the Navy or at West Point. Stephen did consider the offer, as Henry insisted he could perhaps talk to someone he knew in Washington regarding his acceptance.

Henrietta Foster was the sister who was closest to Stephen as he grew up. She was incredibly religious, and tended to expose her views about her siblings publicly, even if her comments were not so kind. Stephen lived with Henrietta on several occasions even after she was married and moved to Ohio (first in Youngstown in 1842 after her first husband Thomas Wick had died, and then again briefly in Warren, with his wife and daughter, in 1859.) She was known for her lengthy letters to her siblings containing her deeply religious beliefs and concerns for their lives. It was she who blatantly spoke out about Stephen’s drinking problem just a few years before his death.

43 John Tasker Howard, 74.
Dunning and Morrison Foster were the two who were most closely associated with Stephen’s career. It is Dunning Foster who gave Stephen his first job as a bookkeeper, and the opportunity to get out of Pittsburgh. Dunning entered a partnership with Archibald Irwin, starting a company known as Irwin and Foster. They served as commission merchants on Cassilly’s Row in Cincinnati.

Dunning also provided support for Stephen in other ways. He was young and unmarried, so he was very much a part of the social life in Cincinnati. This enabled Stephen to make friends and meet people, even if he was not as into the social aspect as his brother. These friends would be people whom he would learn to trust to sing his music. In Cincinnati, Stephen was able commit to the possibilities of his song writing. It is also Dunning who arranged the trip in 1852 where Stephen, Morrison and many of his friends sailed to New Orleans. This was Stephen’s first trip to the South.

It is through the eyes of Morrison Foster, the brother who is closest in age to Stephen, that many valuable insights into the life of the composer may be found. Stephen and Morrison lived together for many years, went to school together, and borrowed things from each other. It was also Morrison to whom Stephen would go for advice about his music. In his biography, My Brother Stephen, Morrison recalls a time when Stephen came to his office at the bank of Monongahela and asked “What is the good name of two syllables for a Southern river? I want to use it in this new song ‘Old Folks at Home.’” They spoke for a while and agreed that “Swanee” was the best choice.

Around the time of that same incident, Stephen received a proposition from E.P. Christy

44 John Tasker Howard, 57.
45 Ibid., 133.
about writing a song that his minstrel group might be allowed to sing before publication. It was Morrison who insisted that Stephen get paid for it, and drew up the form of agreement for he and Christy to sign. This agreement assured Stephen payment, but unfortunately did not prevent Christy’s name from appearing as the composer on the title page of “Old Folks at Home.”

2.8  Marriage

While there is documentation that Dunning had spent time with Jane when she visited Cincinnati, there are no letters that indicate when she and Stephen started their courtship. Research shows that their relationship must have begun sometime around the time that Stephen returned permanently to Pittsburgh around 1850. At this time Jane was also courting a lawyer named Richard Cowan. There is a story about how both Foster and Mr. Cowan called on Jane one evening at her family home. Stephen waited until Cowan had left to ask her what her answer would be to marriage. She said “yes” that night, and they were married on July 22, 1850. They had their first child, Marion, a year later in April. After they returned from their honeymoon, he and Jane moved into East Common with his mother and father, Henry and his wife, and Morrison.

There are many speculations regarding the state of their marriage. Foster descendants say that while Jane sang, she was not particularly fond of music. Also, because her family was Methodist, they looked down upon Stephen’s association with theatre and black-face song. There were several instances in which the couple separated. The first was in 1853, when Stephen moved to New York City. Jane decided to move to Lewistown, PA with her widowed mother, which caused Stephen’s sister to speak sorely
of her “course of conduct.” They were reunited in 1854 when Jane and Marion joined him to live in Hoboken, NJ. They lived there together for a short time until they had to return home to Allegheny to take care of Stephen’s ill parents. They eventually ended up back in New York, but Jane and Marion left again and returned to Pennsylvania around 1862 because of Stephen’s drinking problem and financial struggles. Jane began working for the Pennsylvania Railroad as a telegraph operator in order to make ends meet since Stephen was not doing so well in New York City. She did return to visit him in New York City at certain times and often wrote to Morrison to send money to Stephen. Jane and Marion were not with Stephen when he died.

2.9 Black-Face Minstrelsy and Cincinnati, OH

Although he was incredibly talented at writing ballads, it was Stephen Foster’s plantation melodies and black-face songs performed by traveling minstrel groups that began his success.

Minstrelsy had become a popular means of entertainment in America. Morrison mentions in his biography that both he and Stephen knew and listened to Negro melodies. In fact, it was this type of music that a young Stephen performed with his friends in their childhood thespian group. While still in Pittsburgh before moving to Cincinnati, Stephen attended some minstrel shows, and according to Thomas D. Rice’s grandson, Foster

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46 T.D. Rice was a comedian in the black-faced minstrel shows in America in the 19th century who some named “the father of American minstrelsy.” His performance of the song “Jim Crow” is what brought his rise to fame and was supposedly debuted in Pittsburgh around the time Foster was an teenager.
submitted some of his songs to Rice to sing. Rice declined Foster’s pieces because he composed his own, but praised Stephen and encouraged him to keep writing.\textsuperscript{47}

Although he wrote several of these types of songs in Pittsburgh, it was in Cincinnati where Stephen was fully exposed to the idea of minstrelsy and Negro songs, and that he might be able to profit from it. By the time that Stephen went to Cincinnati in 1846 he had already published one song through W.C. Peters,\textsuperscript{48} “There’s a Good Time a Comin.” Foster had a habit of handing out manuscripts of his songs to people before they were published. Because so many people had a manuscript of this particular song already, the song was circulating around Louisville and Cincinnati. Someone eventually put it in the hands of W.C. Peters, who published it before Foster even got to the city.\textsuperscript{49}

Once Foster got to Cincinnati he submitted “Old Uncle Ned” and “Oh, Susanna” to Mr. Peters. After Peters published them, he generated ten thousand dollars, and two songs became popular all over the country. Not only was W.C. Peters publishing these songs, but so were other publishing companies all over America, thanks to Foster’s irresponsible distribution of his songs. Foster was credited with the authorship on some of these editions, but not all, and he certainly did not receive honoraries from these companies. These pieces became popular so fast that they were integrated into the folk tradition by the American people without acknowledgement of the true author. Both songs were also immediately used in the repertoire of almost every minstrel show in the

\textsuperscript{47} John Tasker Howard, 126.
\textsuperscript{48} Peters was one a few people who gave music lessons to the Foster family when they could afford it while he still lived in Pittsburgh.
\textsuperscript{49} Ken Emerson suggests the possibility that Dunning showed the piece to W.C. Peters, considering he was not only a family friend but also that his office was just a few blocks away from Dunning’s office.
country and “Oh! Susanna” became the marching song of forty-niners on their way to California.\(^{50}\)

These beginnings branded Foster as a popular black-faced melody composer for the rest of his life, building irresponsible habits that would never truly cease.\(^{51}\) Because of his tendency to pass out his music to specific performers in minstrel groups in Cincinnati such as Christy Minstrels and The Sable Harmonists, these groups would earn the privilege of not only performing his works before they were published, but also the privilege of having their name in bigger print than Stephen’s on the published sheet music. He even lost the claim to authorship of one of his most famous songs, “Old Folks at Home,” in a dirty deal made by E.P Christy (head of the Christy Minstrels).

Later in life when Stephen tried to publish other types of songs, they failed miserably. It is his negro and minstrel songs that sold. Because of this, the company who published the majority of his works, Firth, Pond & Co., began to deny publication of works that weren’t written in the style of his minstrel songs later in his life.

While the minstrel song may not have been Foster’s favorite type of song, he took it and made it a kinder, more honest portrayal of African-American culture. While the minstrel show consisted of flashy, crude entertainment, many of Foster’s songs brought sentimentality and sincerity to the show. Minstrel shows became a more humble taste of reality directly relating to the issues Americans were facing at the time, such as slavery and the idea of a civil war.

\(^{50}\) John Tasker Howard, 138.  
\(^{51}\) These habits include excessive distribution of his music before publication and being easily pushed by publishers and minstrel show producers to write only specific types of songs.
2.10 The Works of Stephen Foster

Foster was primarily known for his negro melodies that were performed in minstrel shows, but he was also an accomplished composer of sentimental ballads. Most of his songs, regardless of the type, had texts that he wrote himself, and that focused on the following themes: a longing for love or the loss of a love, death, comfort of home, and tribulations of African-American life. Many of his texts contain vivid imagery from nature, and evoke the deep emotions of humanity derived from the themes mentioned above.

He wrote not just for the voice, but for piano, orchestra and many other instruments. There are over 200 songs that have been authenticated as Foster’s work. Some, such as “Beautiful Dreamer,” were not published until after his death. While some of these songs did bring him financial success, many of them did not. John Tasker Howard wrote an article discussing Foster’s relations with the publishers. It details how much money was made by the publishers from Foster’s songs, and notes whether the publishers cheated him in any way. The following companies are known for publishing many of Foster’s works: W.C. Peters, whose business expanded greatly because of Foster’s early plantation and negro melodies; Firth, Pond & Co.; and John J. Daly and Horace Waters, who published later works that were refused by Firth, Pond & Co..  

While it appears that Foster was under-appreciated, he was treated fairly. Where all of his money went is still a bit of a mystery. There are a few accounts that show his money being spent on alcohol. The real cause of the financial hardships of Stephen

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52 All publication information was verified by information in the Foster Hall Collection in Indianapolis, IN and the University of Pittsburgh Center of American Music Foster Hall Memorial.
Foster and his family are uncertain, but it’s true that his compositions did not generate funds sufficient enough income for his family.\textsuperscript{53}

\section*{2.11 Stephen and Alcohol}

Stephen’s father at one time joined the temperance society, in order to beat his alcoholic tendencies. Stephen had similar tendencies, and also attended temperance meetings, but never took the pledge. No evidence exists proving when his problem with alcohol began, and it seems that his family neglected to mention the issue for some time. Stephen even wrote a few drinking songs, such as “Comrades Fill No Glass for Me,” although their themes were not so merry. There are accounts from his friends in Pittsburgh that “he would walk, talk and drink with you, and yet always seemed distant.”\textsuperscript{54} George Cooper, Foster’s protégée in his later years said that “he drank constantly, but was never intoxicated.”\textsuperscript{55} The University of Pittsburgh’s Center for American Music contains records that show that in 1862, the family’s concern of his dependence on alcohol became severe enough that they sent Ann Eliza’s son, Edward, to New York to bring him home. Stephen refused, prompting Morrison to write to him, “Why are you so careless, Steve?” Stephen wrote back “Don’t worry about me, Mitty.” Despite his family’s continuous insistence, he remained in NYC, without alcoholic treatment, until his death in 1864.

\textsuperscript{53} The advances in printing and publication during this time in America are still fairly new. I believe it was the case with not just Foster, but other American song writers during this time, that it was their publishers who benefited the most financially from their works.
\textsuperscript{54} Emerson, 283.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid. 292.
While the events of Stephen Foster’s life are similar to those that many Americans experience, these events nonetheless shaped who he was personally and musically. Although there can be varying opinions as to why he did certain things, and scholars can attempt to provide a psychological profile to explain events in his life, it is obvious that many of Stephen’s themes and songs are directly related to his life. His reality was expressed in his music.
CHAPTER 3

A CATALOGUE OF THE VOCAL WORKS OF STEPHEN COLLINS FOSTER

One of the most valuable set of books that every singer and voice teacher should own is *Singers Repertoire* by Berton Coffin. Coffin has made the singer’s and teacher’s search for repertoire considerably easier by providing lists of appropriate repertoire for a variety of situations specifically for each voice type and fach. This series of books served as a model for this catalogue focusing on the vocal works of Stephen Collins Foster. Like Coffin’s books, this catalogue provides the singer with the range, tessitura and key, but also the publication date and the important information about the song.

3.1 How to use this catalogue

The six categories contained in this catalogue are as follows: Title, Date, Range, Tessitura, Key, and Song Description. Reading the instructions to this catalogue is important in order to find songs and information in a timely manner.

While most catalogues list songs in alphabetical order, this catalogue lists the pieces in order of the date of publication. While the themes of Stephen Foster’s pieces are predictable, they are often dependent on his life experiences. For example, earlier in his life, especially during the late 1840’s and early 1850’s, a large portion of his
compositions were minstrel songs. The chronological order of his pieces according to publication not only makes groups of songs easier to locate but also helps describe a bit of Foster’s compositional history.

Unless otherwise noted, all of Foster’s songs were published with piano accompaniment. Those published a second time with different accompaniment will have the year and type of accompaniment indicated directly underneath the originally published version.

The titles of the pieces are listed by the title indicated on the first published manuscript. These may not be the titles by which the piece is known. For example, the song we know as “Camptown Races” was published under the title “Gwine to Run All Night.” For convenience, the commonly known title is indicated in parentheses under the published title.

The information in the Range, Tessitura, and Key categories are taken directly from the original, published manuscript of each song. Foster actually wrote many of his songs for the female voice. This is because there were many nice female voices that surrounded him, and also because it was more common for women to purchase and study his pieces. Because of this, the information in these categories has been listed according to the clef of the original compositions, treble clef. Men should not be discouraged from singing these songs, because many of them sit comfortably in either a male or female voice. Men should consider the information provided in their appropriate octave.

Many of Foster’s songs are for both soloist and chorus. These songs are indicated in the catalogue with two asterisks (**). Many of these pieces were written for specific minstrel groups, and contain a verse, sung by a soloist, and a harmonized chorus, sung by
a group. For these songs, only the information for the soloist is provided, as many perform these pieces without an ensemble for the chorus. There are also a few songs that are for either a duet or large ensemble without a soloist. These few will be indicated with three asterisks (** *). For these pieces, a tessitura will not be provided, but ranges for each vocal part will be indicated from the top voice part to the bottom. Again, because this information is based on the actual clef in the original publication, men should consider any ranges in their appropriate octaves. Singers interested in singing one of these minstrel songs should locate the original sheet music to find the choral parts.  

The last category, Song Description, is designed to provide the singer with information about the text (who wrote it and what the theme is) and the historical background. While some of this information can be found easily by opening up a reference book or by typing in the title into an internet search engine, much of the information is found only in the original published sheet music in biographies on Stephen Foster and his music. Any special musical influences or musical effects will be discussed in this section as well, although it is primarily to inform the singer about information on the text.

In many songs, both the text and the music are by Foster. This section will provide information on the authorship of the text or where Foster found the text. If there is no information indicated in this section about a separate source or author for the text, it should be assumed to be Foster’s.

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56 It is also important to note that many of these songs with the soloist are performed singing the melody during the chorus. Considering the tradition of adaptation in folk song, such performance practice is accepted.
3.2 Purpose of Catalogue

There are many resources on the works of Stephen Collins Foster that provide a variety of information on publishers and copyright dates; however, there is not a catalogue with information that is valuable to a singer interested in singing some of Foster’s songs, such as tessitura and key. This catalogue can provide much of the information needed by a singer who is interested in performing Foster’s repertoire. Because research is important for all singers choosing to seriously perform works by a composer, this resource will give them information that they need to choose which songs they wish to perform, and give valuable information to begin their study on Stephen Foster.

This catalogue is a result of the growing interest in Foster’s song repertoire among classically trained singers. While Foster’s songs are primarily known as a part of the folk song literature performed by folk musicians, his lyrical melodies fit the classically trained voice easily. Classical singers Thomas Hampson and Marilyn Horne have performed and recorded several of Foster’s songs, furthering their integration into American art song literature. This catalogue can contribute to this movement. The information in this catalogue can help singers of any genre or style familiarize themselves with Foster’s repertoire.

3.3 Sources

There were multiple sources used to compile the information in this catalogue. While these are listed at the end of the document, it is important to note a few of the most valuable. Steven Saunders and Deane L. Root compiled a critical edition in two volumes
of Foster’s music entitled *The Music of Stephen C. Foster: A Critical Edition*. The Saunders and Root edition provides accurate information on the authenticity of Foster’s works that is sometimes questionable in other sources.

Biographies on Foster by his brother Morrison Foster serve as valuable resources in gathering accurate information on Foster’s music and even compositional style. His 1896 tribute to Stephen, *Biography, Songs and Musical Compositions of Stephen C. Foster* contains a nearly complete list of works written prior to 1860. This resource is helpful, solidifying publication/composition dates and accurate titles.

Another valuable source is the Center for American Music at the University of Pittsburgh that holds the Foster Hall Collection and Stephen Foster Memorial. The collection of Foster family letters and other documents clearly defines events in Foster’s life.
### 3.4 A Catalogue of the Vocal Works of Stephen Collins Foster

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Tessitura</th>
<th>Key</th>
<th>Song Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open Thy Lattice Love</td>
<td>1844</td>
<td>D4-F#5</td>
<td>F4-D#5</td>
<td>D Major</td>
<td>The text of this piece is a poem by George P. Morris. It is a love song that personifies the moon and stars, inviting the narrator’s lover to open her heart and accept his love. This song was dedicated to Susan Pentland, long time friend of Foster.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There’s a Good Time Coming</td>
<td>1846</td>
<td>D4-F5</td>
<td>F4-D5</td>
<td>B Maj</td>
<td>Made popular before Stephen Foster by composer Henry Russell, this poem was written by British poet, Charles MacKay. The hopeful lyrics were sung by new immigrants as they entered the United States in hopes of a better life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lou’siana Belle**</td>
<td>1847</td>
<td>D4-E5</td>
<td>F#4-D5</td>
<td>D Maj</td>
<td>This is Foster’s first attempt at a blackface minstrel song. It is from the perspective of a black slave who is in love with another slave, but wants to keep it from their master. The tempo of this song should resemble a polka.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Must a Fairy’s Dream Be!</td>
<td>1847</td>
<td>C4-F5</td>
<td>F4-C5</td>
<td>C Maj</td>
<td>It is a ballad that speaks about fantasy characters such as the fairy and the mermaid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where is Thy Spirit Mary?</td>
<td>1847</td>
<td>C#4-F#5</td>
<td>E4-C#5</td>
<td>A Maj</td>
<td>This song is in memory of Mary Keller, a woman Foster knew who had died around the time he wrote this piece. The text revolves around the question of where one’s spirit dwells after death.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncle Ned**</td>
<td>1848</td>
<td>E4-D5</td>
<td>G4-D5</td>
<td>F Maj</td>
<td>This song was performed by the Sable Harmonists. It is sentimental in its description of a man known as Uncle Ned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stay Summer Breath</td>
<td>1848</td>
<td>E4-E#5</td>
<td>E4-C5</td>
<td>E Maj</td>
<td>This parlor ballad was dedicated and written for Sophie Marshall, who was said to be a gifted soprano. It is about the joys of summer time and the bitterness of winter.</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Susanna**</td>
<td>1848</td>
<td>F#4-E5</td>
<td>G4-D5</td>
<td>G Major</td>
<td>This piece was one of Foster’s most successful songs. It describes the chase toward the American dream and the longing to be with the ones you love.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Away down Souf**</td>
<td>1848</td>
<td>G4-E5</td>
<td>A4-D5</td>
<td>G Major</td>
<td>A minstrel song from a set of songs written for the Sable Harmonists, this song describes all the wonderful reasons to go down south.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nell was a Lady**</td>
<td>1849</td>
<td>E4-C5</td>
<td>F#4-C5</td>
<td>A Major</td>
<td>This song was written for the Christy Minstrels. It is about a woman named Nelly, who has died and all the emotions her lover has experienced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Brodder Gum**</td>
<td>1849</td>
<td>D4-E5</td>
<td>G4-E5</td>
<td>G Major</td>
<td>The second of three consecutive songs written for Christy Minstrels by Foster, this fun piece is about just singing for no reason at all during work or play.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dolcy Jones**</td>
<td>1849</td>
<td>C4-D5</td>
<td>F4-C5</td>
<td>F Major</td>
<td>This minstrel song is about the joys of courting and young love.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer Longings</td>
<td>1849</td>
<td>F4-E5</td>
<td>A4-D5</td>
<td>G Major</td>
<td>This song was written for Stephen’s friend S.P. Thompson. The text revolves around pleasant memories of lost love.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oh! Lemuel**</td>
<td>1850</td>
<td>D4-D5</td>
<td>G4-D5</td>
<td>G Major</td>
<td>This minstrel song describes a character named Lemuel, and makes fun of his physical appearance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Loves the Flowers</td>
<td>1850</td>
<td>D4-E5</td>
<td>E4-C#5</td>
<td>D Major</td>
<td>The text revolves around pleasant memories of lost love.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nelly Bly**</td>
<td>1850</td>
<td>D4-D5</td>
<td>E4-C5</td>
<td>C Major</td>
<td>This minstrel song describes all the good qualities of the narrator’s lover, Nelly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dolly Day**</td>
<td>1850</td>
<td>E4-D5</td>
<td>E4-C#4</td>
<td>A Major</td>
<td>This song has multiple verses describing how the singer thinks about Dolly all the day long.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gwine to Run all Night**</td>
<td>1850</td>
<td>E4-B4</td>
<td>F#4-B4</td>
<td>D Major</td>
<td>This is one of Foster’s most famous songs, and was intended as a minstrel song for the Christy and Campbell Minstrels and New Orleans Serenades. The text of this song speaks about the fun time had at a horse race.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angelina Baker**</td>
<td>1850</td>
<td>G4-F5</td>
<td>C5-F5</td>
<td>C Major</td>
<td>This plantation melody, also written for the Christy Minstrels, is about how being in love with Angelina was wonderful until she left.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ah! May the Red Rose Live Always</td>
<td>1850</td>
<td>C#4-F#5</td>
<td>F#4-D5</td>
<td>G Major</td>
<td>One of Foster’s more sophisticated songs, the title page of this music indicates that it was written and composed for piano forte. The text contains several questions about life and love through the imagery of nature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Way Down in Ca-I-Ro**</td>
<td>1850</td>
<td>A4-E5</td>
<td>C5-E5</td>
<td>C Major</td>
<td>The text of this song talks about the daily life of an African American in a light-hearted fashion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molly Do You Love Me!</td>
<td>1850</td>
<td>D4-F#5</td>
<td>F#4-D5</td>
<td>A Major</td>
<td>Both the accompaniment and the vocal line of this piece are more sophisticated than in many of his earlier works. The text is a declaration of love and a hope that her love is reciprocated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Voice of By Gone Days</td>
<td>1850</td>
<td>E4-F5</td>
<td>F4-D5</td>
<td>F Major</td>
<td>This ballad’s theme is longing. The text is reminiscent of a time when things were better.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Spirit of my Song</td>
<td>1850</td>
<td>C4-F5</td>
<td>G4-C5</td>
<td>C Major</td>
<td>The text of this piece comes from a poem by Metta Victoria Fuller, also known as the pen name “Singing Sybil.” It personifies the “spirit” of song as the spirit of a woman.</td>
</tr>
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<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I Would Not Die in Springtime</td>
<td>1850</td>
<td>D4-F#5</td>
<td>F#4-D5</td>
<td>D Major</td>
<td>This piece was published by Foster under the pseudonym Milton Moore in honor of Thomas Moore, an Anglo-Irish composer whose works Foster greatly admired. The text and the music were modeled after some of Moore’s works, using vivid descriptions of the different seasons, and regarding the spring a time for life and the winter as a time for death.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Would Not Die in Springtime***</td>
<td>1850</td>
<td>A:F#4-E5</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>D Major</td>
<td>This piece is an arrangement of a solo piece published under the same title and pseudonym Milton Moore. There are no solo verses in this piece and the text is the same as the solo version.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turn Not Away***</td>
<td>1850</td>
<td>V1:D4-E5</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>C Major</td>
<td>This duet is simple harmonically, but its text is heart-wrenching, describing the pain that comes when love is lost.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lily Ray</td>
<td>1850</td>
<td>E♭4-F5</td>
<td>F4-E♭5</td>
<td>E♭ Major</td>
<td>The theme of this piece revolves around the grief felt from the loss of a woman name Lily.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give the Stranger Happy Cheer</td>
<td>1851</td>
<td>F4-E♭5</td>
<td>G5-D5</td>
<td>B♭ Major</td>
<td>This piece should be sung with the swing of a waltz. The text is hopeful, as it encourages people to lift up those around them who may be hurting in some way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melinda May**</td>
<td>1851</td>
<td>E4-F#5</td>
<td>F#4-D5</td>
<td>D Major</td>
<td>Composed for New Orleans Serenaders, the text of this spirited piece asks Melinda to forget all her troubles and enjoy life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilt Thou Be Gone Love***</td>
<td>1851</td>
<td>J: E♭4-G5</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>E♭ Major</td>
<td>The text of this love song is adapted from Act 3 Scene 3 of Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet, and was written for Miss Julia N. Murray, the fiancé of Foster’s brother Morrison.</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Mother, Thou’rt Faithful to Me</td>
<td>1851</td>
<td>E4-E5</td>
<td>F4-D5</td>
<td>F Major</td>
<td>This is Foster’s first “mother” song and as a child sings of his appreciation for his mother’s unconditional love.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweetly She Sleeps, My Alice Fair</td>
<td>1851</td>
<td>D4-F5</td>
<td>F4-D5</td>
<td>Bb Major</td>
<td>“Sweetly She Sleeps” resembles a lullaby in both meter and text. The text describes how Alice looks while she sleeps. It resembles somewhat of a prayer, as the singer hopes she will always be protected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farewell: Old Cottage</td>
<td>1851</td>
<td>D4-E5</td>
<td>G4-D5</td>
<td>G Major</td>
<td>Mrs. Harry Woods, who this song is dedicated to, was a dear friend with Foster. Foster used to play his newly composed music in her family’s home. While this piece appears to have no direct association to the Woods family, the text is about leaving a place that used to be called home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once I Loved Thee Mary Dear</td>
<td>1851</td>
<td>E4-F5</td>
<td>G4-D5</td>
<td>Eb Major</td>
<td>Foster returned to one of his most common themes in this piece, long, lost love. Considering his friend Mary Keller had recently passed away and he had paid for the head stone, it is a good assumption that this piece was written with her in mind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ring, Ring De Banjo</td>
<td>1851</td>
<td>F4-F5</td>
<td>F4-C5</td>
<td>F Major</td>
<td>Foster characterized this piece himself on the cover page as a “new Ethiopian melody.” This resembles some of his earlier minstrel songs, but without a harmonized chorus. It is a song about remembering the good times from the past.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oh! Boys, Carry me ’Long**</td>
<td>1853</td>
<td>F4-F5</td>
<td>F4-D5</td>
<td>F Major</td>
<td>This plantation melody was written specifically for the Christy Minstrels. The text talks about the weariness of an African American’s work and life as a slave.</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>I Would Not Die in Summertime</td>
<td>1851</td>
<td>D4-D5</td>
<td>F#-B</td>
<td>D Major</td>
<td>While this song has beautiful descriptions of summertime, the main theme is death.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Hopes Have Departed Forever</td>
<td>1851</td>
<td>F4-F5</td>
<td>F-D</td>
<td>B Major</td>
<td>This song is one of despair and self pity. Stephen may have gotten the theme from a letter written by his sister Henrietta.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura Lee</td>
<td>1851</td>
<td>D4-E5</td>
<td>G-D</td>
<td>G Major</td>
<td>This song took several months to compose, as Foster was in the middle of several musical projects at the time. This song is musically different than some of his other ballads, but theme of long, lost love is still quite prominent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Folks at Home (guitar...</td>
<td>1851</td>
<td>D4-E5</td>
<td>D-B</td>
<td>D Major</td>
<td>This song was attributed to E.P. Christy, owner of the Christy Minstrels, only because of a shady business deal between him and Foster. It became quite popular and unfortunately was not realized as Foster’s composition until later. The theme is of a longing to be at home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willie My Brave (guitar accompaniment)</td>
<td>1851</td>
<td>D4-E5</td>
<td>F-D</td>
<td>B Major</td>
<td>This song, also dedicated to Susan Pentland (who was now married). The maiden’s lover had said he would return, but instead died at sea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eulalie (guitar accompaniment)</td>
<td>1851</td>
<td>D4-E5</td>
<td>G-D</td>
<td>G Major</td>
<td>The text of this piece is by H.C. Cornwell. This song mourns the death of Eulalie.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farewell my Lilly Dear** (guitar accompaniment)</td>
<td>1851</td>
<td>C4-E5</td>
<td>G-E</td>
<td>C Major</td>
<td>Minstrel groups made monetary offers in order to sing many of Foster’s songs. This is one such song. Christy Minstrels made the highest bid, bringing in the higher royalties than some of his other songs. This piece is about having to leave home and loved ones.</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Massa’s in de Cold Ground**</td>
<td>1852</td>
<td>D4-D5</td>
<td>D4-B4</td>
<td>D Major</td>
<td>This song is about slaves who are mourning the loss of their master, who has died of old age. Foster’s father was bed-ridden and dying at this point, which could explain the themes of grief and guilt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Hour for Thee and Me***</td>
<td>1852</td>
<td>V1:F#4-F#5</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>G Major</td>
<td>After hearing friends Susan Pentland and Jessie Lightner sing his first duet, “Wilt thou be Gone Love,” Foster was inspired to write this one. This piece uses images of nature to express the happiness of love.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Cannot Sing To-Night</td>
<td>1852</td>
<td>D4-D5</td>
<td>G4-D5</td>
<td>G Major</td>
<td>This piece is about remembering happier days and not being able to enjoy the present.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maggie By My Side (guitar accompaniment)</td>
<td>1852</td>
<td>D4-E5</td>
<td>G4-D5</td>
<td>G Major</td>
<td>It was around this time that the song was composed that Foster took a trip down the Mississippi River. This song was probably inspired by that trip. This song is about finding a place to call home and spending the rest of his life with the ones he loves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Old Kentucky Home** (guitar accompaniment)</td>
<td>1853</td>
<td>D4-E5</td>
<td>G4-D5</td>
<td>G Major</td>
<td>This is the state song of Kentucky, although there is no proof that Foster had any real connection there to inspire him to write. This song is also about the comfort of home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annie my Own Love</td>
<td>1853</td>
<td>D4-F#5</td>
<td>G4-E5</td>
<td>G Major</td>
<td>The text of this song is by Foster’s friend Charles Shiras, who was an abolitionist poet and journalist. It is around this time that Jane and Stephen separated, and this somber song of lost love mimics the emotions from this time in his life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Dog Tray (guitar accompaniment)</td>
<td>1854</td>
<td>D4-D5</td>
<td>G4-D5</td>
<td>G Major</td>
<td>This is Foster’s first successful song that was not in blackface dialect or about the South. According to Foster’s brother Morrison, this song was inspired by a setter dog given to Foster.</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Memories (guitar accompaniment)</td>
<td>1853</td>
<td>C#4-E5</td>
<td>E4-B5</td>
<td>G Major</td>
<td>This nostalgic song is about the affects of age and the loss of loved ones. The waltz-like tempo and legato lines are similar to music that might be heard in a bel canto opera.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Ella (guitar accompaniment)</td>
<td>1853</td>
<td>C4-F5</td>
<td>F4-D5</td>
<td>F Major</td>
<td>This song is about Stephen’s daughter, Marion, who he had now been separated from for sometime. In the song the girl becomes “cherub-like” as the father sings proudly about her sweet qualities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellen Bayne** (guitar accompaniment)</td>
<td>1854</td>
<td>C4-E5</td>
<td>G4-E5</td>
<td>C Major</td>
<td>This song is also written about his daughter, but unlike the previous parlor ballad, this one has a harmonized chorus for two voices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willie We Have Missed You (guitar accompaniment)</td>
<td>1854</td>
<td>C4-F5</td>
<td>F4-D5</td>
<td>C Major</td>
<td>By the time this piece had been written, both Foster’s brother and father had passed away. In this song it is not clear if Willie is dead, but he is not home. This song is about how much he is missed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair (guitar accompaniment)</td>
<td>1854</td>
<td>C4-F5</td>
<td>F4-D5</td>
<td>F Major</td>
<td>This piece is written about Foster’s wife, whose nickname was “Jennie.” The song originated with her named spelt correctly, but was changed at the request of the publishers. This lyrical ballad is about a longing for the woman that he loves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Come with Thy Sweet Voice Again (guitar accompaniment)</td>
<td>1854</td>
<td>D#4-F5</td>
<td>G4-E♭5</td>
<td>A♭ Major</td>
<td>The woman referred to in this song is either sleeping or dying, and the singer longs to be near her and hear her voice again. This is one of several Foster compositions that show the influence of bel canto opera.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard Times Come Again No More** (guitar accompaniment)</td>
<td>1854</td>
<td>E♭4-E♭5</td>
<td>G4-C5</td>
<td>E♭ Major</td>
<td>This song was said to be inspired by the Dickens novel, <em>Hard Times</em> and by the Civil War. It is one of his most appreciated songs as it sympathizes with Americans who were struggling both financially and physically.</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Come Where My Love Lies Dreaming***</td>
<td>1854</td>
<td>S:E4-F5</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>F Major</td>
<td>This song, written for a harmonized four part chorus, is through-composed. Foster adds interest to this piece by changing the style from legato to staccato frequently, masking it like a luring, siren song.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Folks</td>
<td>1855</td>
<td>D4-D5</td>
<td>F4-C5</td>
<td>F Major</td>
<td>Foster makes a change in this piece by reviving the light-hearted spirit from his blackface songs, yet not truly using the dialect. The text of this song is forward and suggests that there is no use in complaining about things in life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village Maiden</td>
<td>1855</td>
<td>D4-E5</td>
<td>F4-D5</td>
<td>D Major</td>
<td>Like a requiem, this slow ballad sings about the death of a maiden whom everyone loved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comrades, Fill No Glass for Me</td>
<td>1855</td>
<td>C#4-E5</td>
<td>F4-C5</td>
<td>A Major</td>
<td>Foster’s fondness toward alcohol is revealed in this song; however, it is not spirited like normal drinking songs. Instead, it talks about how he should not drown his sorrows in alcohol, despite how much he wants to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gentle Annie (guitar accompaniment)</td>
<td>1856</td>
<td>D4-E♭5</td>
<td>E♭4-B♭5</td>
<td>E♭ Major</td>
<td>This ballad was influenced by Thomas Moore and Scottish/Irish balladry. The large leaps in this piece imitate the cries or sighs over the loss of Annie.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The White House Chair*</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>E♭4-E♭5</td>
<td>G4-C5</td>
<td>A♭ Major</td>
<td>Neither of these pieces was published, but they were songs celebrating the campaign of President James Buchanan in 1857. Stephen was the musical director of the Buchanan Glee Club. James Buchanan was the brother-in-law of Ann Eliza Foster Buchanan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Abolition Show*</td>
<td></td>
<td>E♭4-E♭5</td>
<td>E♭4-B♭5</td>
<td>E♭ Major</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I See Her Still in my Dreams</td>
<td>1857</td>
<td>C4-F5</td>
<td>F4-D5</td>
<td>F Major</td>
<td>This piece is one of Foster’s least successful songs and the only song composed and published during this year. It is about a lady who has passed away and haunts the dreams of her loved ones.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lula is Gone</td>
<td>1858</td>
<td>D4-E5</td>
<td>F4-D5</td>
<td>D Major</td>
<td>Lula is not dead in this song. She has either moved or gone on vacation to some place like Florida. The heartbreak in this song is characterized by a melodic line that is constantly ascending and descending.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linger in Blissful Repose</td>
<td>1858</td>
<td>F4-F5</td>
<td>F4-D5</td>
<td>B Major</td>
<td>This serenade is perhaps the best example of a Foster song that was influenced by <em>bel canto</em> opera. The sweeping, legato melody is paired with peaceful text about dreaming and being content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where Has Lula Gone?</td>
<td>1858</td>
<td>E4-G5</td>
<td>G4-D5</td>
<td>C Major</td>
<td>This is a follow-up to the song “Lula is Gone.” Lula has either died or is still away and the singer does not known where she has gone. Regardless, she is sorely missed. The frequent fermatas in this piece represent the longing to see her again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Loved One and My Own or Eva</td>
<td>1858</td>
<td>C4-F5</td>
<td>G4-D5</td>
<td>F Major</td>
<td>While not a romantic as some of this other pieces, this song also contains the lyricism found in opera. Eva’s name is sung and held on the highest note of the piece. The theme of death persists in this piece as the beloved Eva is dead.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sadly, to Mine Heart Appealing</td>
<td>1858</td>
<td>C4-G5</td>
<td>G4-D5</td>
<td>F Major</td>
<td>The text of this piece is by Eliza Sheridan Carey, an Irish poet. This poem occurred in a Boston readers digest called <em>Littell’s Living Age</em>. The melody of this piece resembles old Scottish balladry and the theme is of nostalgia and sadness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda has Departed</td>
<td>1859</td>
<td>C4-E5 (optional F5)</td>
<td>F4-C5</td>
<td>C Major</td>
<td>With text by William H. McCarthy, a pressman from the <em>Pittsburgh Daily Dispatch</em>, is about a woman who has died and the singer seems to be speaking of the sadness in the hearts of all who miss her.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parthenia to Ingomar</td>
<td>1859</td>
<td>D4-E5</td>
<td>G4-D5</td>
<td>G Major</td>
<td>This piece also has text by McCarthy. The text is about an infatuation that is so deep that the singer would follow the woman he admires anywhere.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For Thee, Love, For Thee</td>
<td>1859</td>
<td>C4-F5</td>
<td>G4-E5</td>
<td>C Major</td>
<td>This is the last collaboration of Stephen and McCarthy. While the singer of this song does not seem as infatuated as in “Parthenia to Ignomar,” he does long for the presence of his loved one and for the return of happiness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairy Belle</td>
<td>1859</td>
<td>F4-E5</td>
<td>G4-E5</td>
<td>C Major</td>
<td>The “Fairy-Belle” in this piece is a muse whose song has lured the singer into admiration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thou Art the Queen of my Song</td>
<td>1859</td>
<td>C4-E5</td>
<td>G4-D5</td>
<td>C Major</td>
<td>This is the second song in which the phrase “queen of my song” is used. Foster spent nine pages working out the poetry of this piece. The three verses of this piece are about a longing for love.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None Shall Weep a Tear for Me</td>
<td>1860</td>
<td>D4-E♭5</td>
<td>F4-D5</td>
<td>B♭ Major</td>
<td>The text from this piece is from a poem called “My Life is Like the Summer Rose.” Foster took the last line of this poem as the title for this song. It uses the life of a rose to describe the loneliness of the singer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Wife</td>
<td>1860</td>
<td>C4-E5</td>
<td>G4-D5</td>
<td>C Major</td>
<td>This song dramatizes the woman’s fears about her husband, but her belief that regardless of what he does he will always be true to her.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor Drooping Maiden</td>
<td>1860</td>
<td>C4-E♭5</td>
<td>G4-D5</td>
<td>E♭ Major</td>
<td>The poor maiden is not dead but is very sad and longing for an end to her misery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cora Dean**</td>
<td>1860</td>
<td>D4-E5</td>
<td>D4-B4</td>
<td>G Major</td>
<td>This song is a tribute to “Long Island’s lovely daughter,” Cora Dean, who has passed away. The song describes her beauty and the sorrow that has been felt from her death.</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Under the Willow She’s Sleeping**</td>
<td>1860</td>
<td>E♭-E♭5</td>
<td>F4-B♭5</td>
<td>E♭ Major</td>
<td>The theme of this song is death, as in many Foster songs, only this it is a mother who is weeping by her daughter’s grave under the willow tree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Glendy Burk</td>
<td>1860</td>
<td>D4-E5</td>
<td>G4-D5</td>
<td>G Major</td>
<td>A bit more upbeat than some of Foster’s other pieces, “The Glendy Burk” is a reminder of some of his other songs such as “Oh! Susanna.” This piece is named after a boat that was named after a New Orleans banker, who Stephen’s brother Morrison had done business with. This light-hearted song is written with a bit of dialect and is about sailing south to Louisiana.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny’s Coming O’er the Green</td>
<td>1860</td>
<td>E♭-E♭5</td>
<td>E♭-C5</td>
<td>E♭ Major</td>
<td>This is the first of a group of songs written for Clark’s School Visitor, a publication for school children. The name “Jenny” is after his wife, and this light-hearted song talks about all the reasons to love her. This song is like a light Irish ballad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beautiful Child of Song</td>
<td>1860</td>
<td>D4-F5</td>
<td>F4-D5</td>
<td>F Major</td>
<td>Resembling Italian song, this piece is very legato with triplets in the piano. The child is a music with a beautiful voice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Black Joe**</td>
<td>1860</td>
<td>D4-E5</td>
<td>F♯-D5</td>
<td>D Major</td>
<td>Similar to Foster’s song “Uncle Ned,” in this song Joe is about to die and is thinking back on his life. There is no dialect in this song, yet sill contains a chorus. Joe was an actual slave in Jane Foster’s childhood home who Stephen actually stated he would write a song about one day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Down Among the Cane Brakes**</td>
<td>1860</td>
<td>D4-E5</td>
<td>G4-D5</td>
<td>G Major</td>
<td>This ballad is a woeful ballad about the way things used to be before having to work as a slave in Mississippi.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Virginia Belle**</td>
<td>1860</td>
<td>F4-E5</td>
<td>F4-C5</td>
<td>B♭ Major</td>
<td>Virginia is another woman who has died, and this song is about how her beauty and gentleness was taken from the world without warning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Little Ballad Girl</td>
<td>1860</td>
<td>E♭4-F5</td>
<td>G4-E♭5</td>
<td>E♭ Major</td>
<td>This is one of Foster’s saddest songs. The little girl is forced to peddle her father’s music for money after he dies. Now only does she have to mourn her father’s death, but she also has to deal with the poor treatment of the older gentleman she tries to sell them to. This is the third song written for <em>Clark’s School Visitor</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mine is the Mourning Heart***</td>
<td>1861</td>
<td>S:D4-D5</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>B♭ Major</td>
<td>Also written for <em>Clark’s School Visitor</em>, this duet is about the sadness of the death of a loved one after praying that they would be safe. Stephen taught this song to his friend, John Mahon’s ten-year old daughter. She and Stephen sang this together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Bet Your Money on de Shanghai</td>
<td>1861</td>
<td>C4-E5</td>
<td>G4-C5</td>
<td>C Major</td>
<td>This song is a light-hearted plantation song with a bit of dialect. It has several comical verses. While it is supposed to depict blackface song, it is more reminiscent of a Scot-Irish song.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molly Dear Good Night</td>
<td>1861</td>
<td>C4-E♭5</td>
<td>F4-B♭4</td>
<td>B♭ Major</td>
<td>This ballad is dedicated to Mrs. J. Edgar Thompson, who is the sister-in-law of his brother, William. The singer is either dying or parting for a short time, as he assures Molly that they will meet again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Willie Dear is Dying</td>
<td>1861</td>
<td>B♭3-E♭5</td>
<td>D4-C5</td>
<td>E Major</td>
<td>The original sheet music of this piece states “as sung by Gustavus Geary,” a well-known singer during the time. This was added by the publishers to lure the public into buying it. This piece is sung from the perspective of someone asking for another person to come home before their loved one dies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lizzie Dies To-Night</td>
<td>1861</td>
<td>D4-F#5</td>
<td>D4-B4</td>
<td>D Major</td>
<td>Written for <em>Clark's School Visitor</em>, this sad ballad has text by Mary Bynon Reese. The text is from the perspective of a little girl who is dying and speaking to her mother.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Bright Bright Summer days are Gone</td>
<td>1861</td>
<td>D4-D5</td>
<td>F4-D5</td>
<td>D Major</td>
<td>The first of several songs published by John Daly after Firth, Pond &amp; Co. declined publication of several of his songs... This nostalgic piece remembers the days of his youth and how they will never return.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'll be a Soldier</td>
<td>1861</td>
<td>C#4-D5</td>
<td>F4-C#5</td>
<td>D Major</td>
<td>This song is about the realities of going to war and leaving loved ones at home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why Have my Loved Ones Gone**</td>
<td>1861</td>
<td>D4-E♭5</td>
<td>F4-D5</td>
<td>B♭ Major</td>
<td>By the time, Jane and Marion had left Stephen again and several of his family members have passed. This song is about the grief and loneliness one feels without his loved ones around.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oh! Tell me of My Mother</td>
<td>1861</td>
<td>C4-F5</td>
<td>F4-B♭4</td>
<td>B♭ Major</td>
<td>In this piece the singer asks an older woman about his mother, who has passed away.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farewell Mother Dear</td>
<td>1861</td>
<td>D4-F5</td>
<td>F4-C5</td>
<td>B♭ Major</td>
<td>In this piece, it is not the mother who is dying, but the song or daughter. He or she pleads with the assurance that they will meet again someday.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweet Little Maid of the Mountain**</td>
<td>1861</td>
<td>E4-E5</td>
<td>A4-E5</td>
<td>C Major</td>
<td>The singer in this piece is apart from his lover who lives in the mountains and can’t wait to be with her again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farewell Sweet Mother</td>
<td>1861</td>
<td>E4-E5</td>
<td>F4-D5</td>
<td>A Major</td>
<td>This song is identical in theme to “Farewell Mother Dear.” The singer is dying and asks his mother not to mourn him.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Little Belle Blair**</td>
<td>1861</td>
<td>C4-E5</td>
<td>C4-G4</td>
<td>C Major</td>
<td>Similar in theme a his earlier piece “Gentle Anne,” this piece is also about a dead woman, but with a harmonized chorus meant for the minstrel stage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nell and I</td>
<td>1861</td>
<td>C4-E5</td>
<td>F4-C5</td>
<td>C Major</td>
<td>This ballad describes the good times that a couple had together, and how the singer misses the love they used to have.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Penny for Your Thoughts</td>
<td>1861</td>
<td>C4-E5</td>
<td>G4-D5</td>
<td>C Major</td>
<td>In this song, the singer is talking to a friend, who is daydreaming and thinking about the person he loves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Jenny Dow**</td>
<td>1862</td>
<td>D4-E5</td>
<td>E4-C#5</td>
<td>A Major</td>
<td>This sweet, light song is about a girl named Jenny, who lives far away, but makes the singer happy when he’s around her. At this time, Foster’s wife, Jane, had moved back to Pennsylvania. This song could be about her and the absence of her in his life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Will be True to Thee</td>
<td>1862</td>
<td>E#4-E5</td>
<td>F4-C5</td>
<td>E Major</td>
<td>This is a lovely song of devotion no matter what comes in life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Merry, Merry Month of May</td>
<td>1862</td>
<td>D4-F5</td>
<td>F4-D5</td>
<td>B Major</td>
<td>While the tune of this song seems as if it should be for children, the content is for adults. It talks about the days of youth that had since been long past.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Dream of my Mother and my Home</td>
<td>1862</td>
<td>C#4-D5</td>
<td>F#4-C5</td>
<td>D Major</td>
<td>This song is about the contentment one can find from being at home with his or her family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That’s What’s the Matter</td>
<td>1862</td>
<td>D4-E5</td>
<td>D4-B4</td>
<td>D Major</td>
<td>This piece was sung and made popular by Dan Bryant, whose minstrel group was popular in NYC. This popular Civil War song takes a stance against the Confederacy, although it is uncertain as to rather Foster had an actual opinion on the manner.</td>
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<td>Better Times Are Coming**</td>
<td>1862</td>
<td>C4-C5</td>
<td>E4-A4</td>
<td>C Major</td>
<td>This is a parlor ballad with a four voice chorus. This song hail’s Abraham Lincoln and his cabinet for all the work they’ve done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slumber my Darling</td>
<td>1862</td>
<td>E♭4-E♭5</td>
<td>F4-C5</td>
<td>E♭ Major</td>
<td>This is a lullaby sung by a mother to her child as she rocks it to sleep. The text is about how the mother will guard and protect her child and the child’s dreams.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merry Little Birds are We**</td>
<td>1862</td>
<td>D4-D5</td>
<td>D4-A5</td>
<td>D Major</td>
<td>The text is about the joys of being outside in the spring and summer time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No One to Love</td>
<td>1862</td>
<td>C4-E5</td>
<td>E4-B4</td>
<td>C Major</td>
<td>This sad song is about a person who feels all alone in the world and as though no one loves him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Home, No Home</td>
<td>1862</td>
<td>D4-E5</td>
<td>G4-D5</td>
<td>D Major</td>
<td>This song is about a person who feels he has no home to go to when times are tough, and must roam the world alone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was my Brother in the Battle?</td>
<td>1862</td>
<td>C4-F5</td>
<td>F4-D5</td>
<td>F Major</td>
<td>The singer in this song asks a soldier, who has just returned home from the war, if he knew his brother, hoping that his brother isn’t dead but instead coming home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are Coming Father Abraam, 300,000 More**</td>
<td>1862</td>
<td>D4-E5</td>
<td>G4-D5</td>
<td>C Major</td>
<td>The text is based on a poem that was published anonymously in the New York Post after Lincoln’s call for more troops in July of 1862. The real author of the poem was a wealthy, NY banker and abolitionist, James Gibbons. There were many settings of this piece by many different composers. Foster dedicated his to President Lincoln.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ll be Home Tomorrow**</td>
<td>1862</td>
<td>D4-F5</td>
<td>A4-D5</td>
<td>B♭ Major</td>
<td>This song could be about a soldier returning home from the war, but can also be about anyone who has been away from home and loved ones and is about to return.</td>
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<td>Happy Hours at Home**</td>
<td>1862</td>
<td>D4-E5</td>
<td>G4-D5</td>
<td>B&gt; Major</td>
<td>Reviving the theme of “home,” Foster is no longer mourning the loss of home, but instead is rejoicing in being at home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gentle Lena Clare**</td>
<td>1862</td>
<td>C4-E5</td>
<td>C4-G5</td>
<td>C Major</td>
<td>This is a love song written about a woman named Lena Clare.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We’ve a Million in the Field, 1,000,000**</td>
<td>1862</td>
<td>D4-D5</td>
<td>D4-B4</td>
<td>D Major</td>
<td>This civil war song talks about how the Union must continue to fight and be strong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Love I Bear to Thee</td>
<td>1863</td>
<td>E&gt;4-F5</td>
<td>F4-D5</td>
<td>B&gt; Major</td>
<td>This love song is very beautiful, but not at all recognized during Foster’s life. The lyricism is similar to that found in Romantic Opera.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bury Me in the Morning, Mother***</td>
<td>1863</td>
<td>S:E4-F5</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>F Major</td>
<td>These four songs were published by Horace Waters. The first two belong to a publication of hymns called the <em>Golden Harp</em>. All of these songs are religious in nature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Ella’s An Angel***</td>
<td></td>
<td>A:D4-D5</td>
<td>C Major</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suffer Little Children to Come Until me***</td>
<td></td>
<td>T:E3-C4</td>
<td>F Major</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willie’s Gone to Heaven***</td>
<td></td>
<td>B:F2-F3</td>
<td>E&gt; Major</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m Nothing but a Plain Old Soldier</td>
<td>1863</td>
<td>C4-F5</td>
<td>F4-D5</td>
<td>F Major</td>
<td>This song is called a patriotic ballad by Foster. It tells the tale of a revolutionary war soldier who has grown old and remembers his days serving the military.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’d be a Fairy</td>
<td>1863</td>
<td>E&gt;4-F5</td>
<td>F4-C5</td>
<td>A&gt; Major</td>
<td>Like some other of Foster’s songs in this year, this has an optimistic message. The singer exclaims that no matter what happens he or she is determined to be joyous and free like a fairy would be.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bring my Brother Back to Me**</td>
<td>1863</td>
<td>E4-E5</td>
<td>G4-D5</td>
<td>C Major</td>
<td>The text of this piece is written by George Cooper, Foster’s protegee in the last few years before he died. This is another song about hope that a family member will return safely after the war.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
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<td>Song Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oh! There’s No Such Girl as Mine</td>
<td>1863</td>
<td>C4-E5</td>
<td>G4-E5</td>
<td>C Major</td>
<td>This light-hearted parlor song is about how much the singer loves his girl. Foster makes use of several fermatas to emphasize the phrase, “There’s no such girl as mine.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Golden Harp***</td>
<td>1863</td>
<td>S:C4-F#5</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>E♭ Major</td>
<td>This collection is a group of religious hymns and ensemble songs written by Foster and published by Horace Waters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A:C4-D5</td>
<td></td>
<td>C Major</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>T:E3-F#4</td>
<td></td>
<td>G Major</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B:F2-G3</td>
<td></td>
<td>D Major</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny June**</td>
<td>1863</td>
<td>E♭4-E♭5</td>
<td>E♭4-B♭4</td>
<td>E♭ Major</td>
<td>With text also by George Cooper, this piece was performed by the Wood Minstrels. It is a love sung about a lady named Jenny June.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Soldier in the Colored Brigade**</td>
<td>1863</td>
<td>E4-E5</td>
<td>G4-D5</td>
<td>C Major</td>
<td>This song is from the prospective of a black man headed off to be a soldier. The text is written by George Cooper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are Plenty of Fish in the Sea</td>
<td>1863</td>
<td>E4-E5</td>
<td>E4-C5</td>
<td>C Major</td>
<td>While other Foster songs mourn love lost, this song shrugs its shoulder at a forsaken lover, as there are many other women out there looking for love.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When this Dreadful War is Ended**</td>
<td>1863</td>
<td>D4-E5</td>
<td>D4-B♭4</td>
<td>D Major</td>
<td>Also about the war, the singer talks about how he will return home when the war is over and hopes his lover has been faithful. This text is by George Cooper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lena our Loved One is Gone</td>
<td>1863</td>
<td>B♭3-E♭5</td>
<td>G4-E♭5</td>
<td>E♭ Major</td>
<td>With words and music by Foster, this song mourns, yet celebrates the life of a lady named Lena.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katy Bell**</td>
<td>1863</td>
<td>C4-F5</td>
<td>G4-D5</td>
<td>C Major</td>
<td>This upbeat song, with a harmonizes chorus, is about a man who meets up with a lady named Katy Bell and the love he feels for her. The text is by George Cooper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Range</td>
<td>Tessitura</td>
<td>Key</td>
<td>Song Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>Larry’s Good Bye</td>
<td>1863</td>
<td>D4-F5</td>
<td>B♭4-E♭5</td>
<td>B♭ Major</td>
<td>This song is a tale about a man named Larry, who bravely left his love, Norah, to go off to war. Larry decides to marry her before he leaves in case he dies. The text is by George Cooper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There was a Time</td>
<td>1863</td>
<td>E♭4-E♭5</td>
<td>E♭4-C♭5</td>
<td>A♭ Major</td>
<td>The text of this piece is by J.D. Byrne. The singer has been away for some time and remembers saying goodbye, but is now happy to come home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willie Has Gone to the War**</td>
<td>1863</td>
<td>E♭4-E♭5</td>
<td>G♭4-E♭5</td>
<td>E♭ Major</td>
<td>With text by George Cooper, this song is yet another about a loved one going off to war and the sadness it has brought.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kissing in the Dark</td>
<td>1863</td>
<td>E♭4-F5</td>
<td>G♭4-E♭5</td>
<td>C Major</td>
<td>This is probably one of the only songs blatantly talking about any kind of physical affection. The text, by George Cooper, is about a couple who kisses in the dark, which Foster compliments with a moving, tempo with only chords in the accomplishments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For the Dear Old Flag I Die**</td>
<td>1863</td>
<td>F4-F5</td>
<td>F4-D♭5</td>
<td>F Major</td>
<td>The exact copyright date for this piece is unknown, but it was published and research shows that it must have been sometime in October of 1863. Regardless, the text of this piece is a poem written by George Cooper based on the last words of a drummer boy, who was wounded in the Battle of Gettysburg. Foster’s musical setting of this resembles the steady tempo of a beating drunk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Soldier’s Home**</td>
<td>1863</td>
<td>F4-F5</td>
<td>F4-D♭5</td>
<td>F Major</td>
<td>The text in the beginning of this song leads the audience to believe that the soldier will make it home safely, but by the end of the song, he is dead. Foster uses homophonic texture to support the vocal line and the story of the fallen soldier. The text is by George Cooper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
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<td>Key</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Wife is a Most Knowing Woman</td>
<td>1863</td>
<td>E4-F5</td>
<td>G4-D5</td>
<td>E♭ Major</td>
<td>This song is about how wives always know when their husbands are up to something bad. The text of the piece is written by George Cooper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oh! Why am I so Happy?</td>
<td>1863</td>
<td>E4-G5</td>
<td>G4-D5</td>
<td>F Major</td>
<td>Underneath the title of this song it states that it was “written and composed for Master Wood, of Wood’s Minstrels.” This song simply asks why everything in life is all of the sudden so happy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onward and Upward! We Will Keep a Bright Lookout</td>
<td>1863</td>
<td>S:C4-F5</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>C Major</td>
<td>Both pieces were published within days of each other. These hymn-like songs have texts by George Cooper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Song of All Songs</td>
<td>1863</td>
<td>C4-F5</td>
<td>F4-C5</td>
<td>F Major</td>
<td>It is not completely certain, who wrote the words, although John F. Poole is a possibility. This song is about other songs that the singer has written and performed over time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Atheneum Collection of Hymns and Tunes for Church and Sunday School</em>**</td>
<td>1863</td>
<td>S:D4-E5</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>C Major</td>
<td>This is a collection of religious songs by multiple composers. Stephen Foster composed nine pieces for this. While he wrote some of the lyrics, George Cooper also had a few of his texts set by Foster for this collection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Boy is Coming from the War</td>
<td>1863</td>
<td>D4-F5</td>
<td>F4-D5</td>
<td>C Major</td>
<td>This text, by George Cooper, is the story of a mother expressing her joy that her son is coming home from the war, when he is really dead and she doesn’t know it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If You’ve Only Got a Moustache</td>
<td>1864</td>
<td>D4-F#5</td>
<td>E4-B4</td>
<td>D Major</td>
<td>This comedic song is meant to tell those men who have not yet found love to not give up. The song believes that growing a “handsome” moustache can help one find true love. The text of this song is by George Cooper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. and Mrs. Brown***</td>
<td>1864</td>
<td>S:C4-E5</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>C Major</td>
<td>This is the first duet that Foster had written in many years. The comedic text by Cooper is set musically by Foster in two ways. During the verses when the wife and husband are discussing why the husband has come home late Foster sets static chords, but during the harmonized duet when the wife refuses to talk to the husband and the husband tries to give his wife a kiss Foster adds an active accompaniment of 16th notes to further the chaos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilt Thou Be True</td>
<td>1864</td>
<td>E4-F5</td>
<td>F4-D5</td>
<td>F Major</td>
<td>This ballad by Foster and Cooper is about asking for forgiveness and faithfulness from a lover. The singer has left for some reason and is concerned about his lover waiting for him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When Old Friends Were Here</td>
<td>1864</td>
<td>D4-E♭5</td>
<td>F4-D5</td>
<td>B♭ Major</td>
<td>This nostalgic song is remembering the good times had when all of his friends were around him. The text is by George Cooper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She was All the World to Me</td>
<td>1864</td>
<td>D4-E♭5</td>
<td>G4-D5</td>
<td>E♭ Major</td>
<td>The text of this song was written by a Dr. Duffy, and is one of the many songs published after Foster’s death. The theme of lost love returns as the singer remember how much the woman he loves meant to him before they separated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sitting by my Own Cabin Door</td>
<td>1864</td>
<td>C4-E5</td>
<td>G4-D5</td>
<td>F Major</td>
<td>Both the words and the music are by Foster. The nostalgic nature of this piece is coupled with the reality of impeding death.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somebody’s Coming to See Me Tonight**</td>
<td>1864</td>
<td>D4-F♯5</td>
<td>G4-D5</td>
<td>D Major</td>
<td>This text is by George Cooper. It is a song about a man coming to visit a woman. He describes what they will do when he gets there.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Range</td>
<td>Tessitura</td>
<td>Key</td>
<td>Song Description</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| When Dear Friends are Gone             | 1864 | E4-F5      | F4-C5     | Eb Major | This is another song expressing the sadness one feels when not surrounded by his or her loving friends. Stephen Foster wrote both the music and the text for this song.
| Give This to Mother                   | 1864 | Eb-F5      | G4-E5     | Eb Major | Although Foster and Cooper had already collaborated on the last words of the dying drummer boy, this song doesn’t mimic the boy’s exact words, but did inspire the compositions. Foster wrote both the words and the music to this interpretation of the boy’s last words to his mother on his death bed.
| Tell me Love of thy Early Dreams      | 1864 | D4-F5      | G4-E5     | Eb Major | The text of this ballad is about a person who loves his lover so much that he wants to know everything about her, including her dreams.
| Beautiful Dreamer                     | 1864 | D4-F5      | G4-E5     | Eb Major | This is one of Foster’s most beautiful and popular pieces. Although it was said to be the last song he wrote, that is not true, as it was written in 1862. This is a siren song with beautiful melodies. It is about dreaming and taking a chance on love.
| The Voices That are Gone**            | 1865 | E4-F5      | G4-D5     | C Major | The words and music of this piece are both by Foster. The music to this piece is very slow and lyrical to reinforce the nostalgic and mournful theme of this piece. The text talks about loneliness and a longing for companionship.
| My Angel Boy                          | 1865 | D4-E5      | E4-B5     | G Major | The text of this piece was written by H. Brougham. It is about a mother who is watching her son die and is grief stricken.
| Sweet Emerald Isle that I Love so Well** | 1866 | C4-F5      | G4-D5     | F Major | Emerald Isle is supposed to be the home of the singer, who is nostalgic about the days that he spent there. The text of this piece is by George Cooper.

63
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
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<th>Range</th>
<th>Tessitura</th>
<th>Key</th>
<th>Song Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heavenly Echo***</td>
<td>1867</td>
<td>S:C4-F5</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>C Major</td>
<td>Horace Waters published the remaining hymns written by Stephen Foster that were written before his death in this anthology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiss Me Dear Mother Ere I Die</td>
<td>1869</td>
<td>C4-E5</td>
<td>F4-D5</td>
<td>F Major</td>
<td>Foster wrote both the words and the music to this song. It is about a son who is dying and would like to have a kiss from his mother before he dies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Thousand Miles from Home</td>
<td>1870</td>
<td>D4-F5</td>
<td>F4-D5</td>
<td>Eb Major</td>
<td>This song was written in 1861, although not published until much later. The theme in this song is about home and how being away from it makes one lonely and sad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>While the Bowl Goes Around**</td>
<td>1870</td>
<td>Eb-E5</td>
<td>G4-D5</td>
<td>Eb Major</td>
<td>This is one of the few drinking songs that Foster wrote. It talks about drinking with friends and how it makes everything better.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dearer that Life!</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>E4-F5</td>
<td>G4-E5</td>
<td>C Major</td>
<td>This piece has text written by George Cooper and was given to him by Foster just a few weeks before he died. This sweet song uses nature to describe love.64</td>
</tr>
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CHAPTER 4

SINGING STEPHEN FOSTER

A STUDY GUIDE FOR PERFORMERS FOR SELECTED FOSTER SONGS

Stephen Foster did not trust just anyone to sing his music. He had specific friends, neighbors and performers whom he preferred to sing his songs. These people he chose because of their excellent singing voices and “correct method of singing.” 57 He delivered many of his songs to specific people to be sung before they were even published, which did not benefit him monetarily. Nevertheless, his songs were intended for a trained singer, and although many of his songs seem to be from the perspective of a male, they were written with a female voice in mind. Foster began composing during a time when singing was not considered masculine. Thus, his music was bought and sung primarily by women.

The uniqueness of Foster’s melodies is that they are lyrical and well composed, yet simple enough to be easily sung and adapted by both the trained and non-trained singer. This and the ever growing publishing and music-distributing business enabled his music to spread into households all over America. His music reached many people: men,

Morrison Foster, 40.
women, slaves, freedmen, abolitionists, confederates, children, uneducated and educated. Because of all of these things, Foster’s vast song repertoire is valuable to singers of all types of music. This chapter provides a general performance guide for the classically trained musician, and contains performance suggestions so that the musician may be able to prepare the songs with correct style while maintaining classical technique.

4.1 Vocal Style and Technique Considerations

The vocal production that should be used in performing Foster’s melodies should be natural. In general, a singer’s natural vibrato should be used regardless of the type of song performed. Likewise, the natural timbre of the voice should not be modified. Overly modified or rounded vowels that are often needed in some other languages are not necessary. The natural quality of the English language should not be altered, and the singer should sing the text in the manner he or she would speak it.

The exception arises in Foster’s humorous minstrel songs. The jokes and playful text were part of the entertainment of this type of song in performances of minstrel shows. In this case, not only can vibrato be removed at the discretion of the singer, but the quality of the voice can and should be altered in order to create specific sounds necessary to achieve the humorous affect.

4.2 Other Performance Considerations

As mentioned in Chapter 3, there are certain sections of songs, and even complete songs, written for choir. Many of these songs have been adapted by solo performers by
just singing the melody during the harmonized choral section. It is fine to do so; however, if one has the means and the singers to perform the choral sections of these songs, performing the song as intended should be preferred. This would be historically accurate, as Foster wrote this harmonized chorus for specific minstrel groups, and should be encouraged as part of the performance practice of his music.

There are also many ways in which a performer can group Foster’s songs for performance. Although any way is acceptable, one should consider theme when choosing a grouping of songs. For example, if one were to choose the theme of *home*, multiple pieces could be found in the catalogue in a variety of keys and tempos. While Foster’s themes are predictable, his melodies, meters and harmonies do differ from song to song, and contrast can be found even in those with a common theme.

4.3 Study Guide

The following section contains study guides for several of Foster’s songs. Various types of pieces that Foster composed are represented in the study guide, so that the suggestions may be transferred to others of their kind. The material in the study guide gives the singer a process for learning Foster’s music. Information such as key, range and tessitura for each piece are not discussed, as they have already been listed in the catalogue.
4.4 *Open Thy Lattice Love*

Published: December 7, 1844 by George Willig

Music: Stephen Collins Foster

Words: George P. Morris

Text:
Verse 1: Open thy lattice, love listen to me!
The cool balmy breeze is abroad on the sea!
The moon like a queen, roams her realms of blue,
And the stars keep their vigils in heaven for you
Ere morn's gushing light tips the bills with its ray,
Away o'er the waters away and away!
Then open thy lattice, love listen to me!
While the moon's in the sky and the breeze on the sea!

Verse 2. Open thy lattice, love listen to me!
In the voyage of life, love our pilot will be!
He will sit at the helm wherever we rove,
And steer by the load-star he kindled above
His shell for a shallop will cut the bright spray,
Or skim like a bird o'er the waters away;
Then open thy lattice, love listen to me!
While the moon's in the sky and the breeze on the sea!

Background Information:

*Open Thy Lattice Love* was not Foster’s first composition, but when he was just the age of eighteen it became his first published piece. It was copyrighted by George Willig of Pittsburgh, though he made a costly mistake in his printing by misprinting the composers name as L.C. Foster. This mistake smothered what should have been a monumental moment for Foster’s career.
This piece can be best described as a parlor ballad. Foster found the text for this piece in the October 14, 1843 edition of *The New Mirror*, which was a Saturday paper printed in New York. This text was printed in that edition under the same title by poet George P. Morris. This poem was also set to music by Joseph Philippi Knight, although it never reached the same popularity as Foster’s version.

The text describes a serenade outside of a lady’s window, during which a gentleman invites her to come to him and open her heart to the possibility of a great love affair. Foster’s music is somewhat spontaneous, which made his version more memorable than Mr. Knight’s version. This piece is dedicated by Foster to Miss Susan E. Pentland, who was 13 years old at the time of its publication. Susan was Stephen’s childhood friend and neighbor. He spent much time with her as a child, and their friendship remained in tact through the years. Susan was an excellent singer, and one of the people whom Foster would entrust to sing many of his newly composed songs. She was eventually married to Andrew Robinson, who was also a childhood friend of Foster, and one of “The Five Nice Young Men” who gathered at Stephen’s home to sing, read music, and socialize.

Performance Considerations:

There are many musical ideas in this piece not seen in other Foster compositions that should be emphasized in performance. The first is the presence of compound meter. The majority of Stephen’s songs are written in simple meter, but those written in

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58 John Tasker Howard, 116.
compound meter are often sentimental in nature. This particular piece has a moving
tempo indicating that leaning, or emphasizing beats one and four will allow the singer to
form appropriate musical phrases that coincide with the text.

This piece is vocally difficult, as there are several large leaps in the vocal line.
The person who sings this should have a strong middle voice, and should be able to
successfully move through the passaggio when approaching the large, melodic leaps.
The leaps should be smooth, without break, and the upper notes should not be abrupt, but
merely touched. Emphasis should be on the bottom note, but the leaps as a whole should
not be rushed. An appropriate amount of time can be taken to achieve a nice vocal
quality. Stretching these leaps is not only necessary vocally, but also expressive and
eloquent.

As a general rule in Foster’s pieces, any descending or ascending melodic patterns
should be compressed, or moved through. This is easy to accomplish if one thinks of the
natural flow of the English language without strictly abiding to the rhythms. This does
not mean that those phrases should be treated as recitative, but instead as a motion
forward to the next strong beat or the beginning of the next phrase.

A singer may notice that in the first phrase there is a rest in the middle of the text,
but no punctuation. These rests should not be treated as disruptions of the vocal line, but
as lifts. The singer should be careful not to inaccurately elongate the rests, as this will
disrupt the text, phrasing and tempo. A singer should find some sort of expressive reason
for the rests. For example, the singer could think of them as sighs, or mere nervousness
energy, characterizing how the singer might attempt win the heart of this young woman.
In mm. 9-11 of the original published piece, Foster indicates a rallentando. He does not follow conventional notation with this, but instead stretches the word over the three measures. One should take this literally, applying the marking to all three measures.

4.5 Gwine to Run All Night or De Camptown Race

Published: February 19, 1850 by F.D. Benteen

Words and Music: Stephen C. Foster

Text:
Verse 1: De Camptown ladies sing dis song, Doo-dah! doo-dah!
De Camptown race-track five miles long, Oh, doo-dah day!
I come down dah wid my hat caved in, Doo-dah! doo-dah!
I go back home wid a pocket full of tin, Oh, doo-dah day!

Chorus: Gwine to run all night!
Gwine to run all day!
I'll bet my money on de bob-tail nag,
Somebody bet on de bay.

Verse 2: De long tail filly and de big black hoss, Doo-dah! doo-dah!
Dey fly de track and dey both cut across, Oh, doo-dah-day!
De blind hoss sticken in a big mud hole, Doo-dah! doo-dah!
Can't touch bottom wid a ten foot pole, Oh, doo-dah-day!

Chorus

Verse 3: Old muley cow come on to de track, Doo-dah! doo-dah!
De bob-tail fling her ober his back, Oh, doo-dah-day!
Den fly along like a rail-road car, Doo-dah! doo-dah!
Runnin' a race wid a shootin' star, Oh, doo-dah-day!

Chorus

Verse 4: See dem flyin' on a ten mile heat, Doo-dah doo-dah!
Round de race track, den repeat, Oh, doo-dah-day!
I win my money on de bob-tail nag, Doo-dah! doo-dah!
I keep my money in an old tow-bag, Oh, doo-dah-day!
Background Information:

This piece was made popular under the title “Camptown Races,” although it was published as “Gwine to run all night.” As many of Foster’s minstrel songs, this piece indicates the following on the title page: “as sung by the Christy & Campbell Minstrels and New Orleans Serenaders.” This was something that was commonly done by publishers as a way to market new works. “Camptown Races” and several other minstrel songs by Foster were given to specific minstrel companies to sing prior to publication to lure people into purchasing it.

It is uncertain exactly what inspired Foster to write this piece. Despite their illegal status, races did happen in Pittsburgh. In fact, there were races going on at the very time that Foster was born. There was also a novel by Henry Brackenridge called *Modern Chivalry* that begins at a horse race in Pittsburgh. Regardless of its inspiration, this piece was quite popular. It was modeled after the typical “call and response” song of the African-American culture, which can explain its popularity among that culture and in the minstrel shows.

Performance Considerations:

This song has been reproduced over the years, and the dialect from the original publication is most often omitted. It is the performer’s decision whether or not the dialect should be kept, but if it is, it should be as authentic as possible. This piece is supposed to be light-hearted and fun, without much seriousness about the singing. Vibrato and legato are not necessary, and the presentation of the piece is the most important. All words
should be punctuated and accented. Even the choral section in this piece is accented, and there is no need to worry about blend. Every singer should sing with his/her full voice.

4.6 My Old Kentucky Home, Good-night

Published: January 31, 1853 by Firth, Pond & Company

Words and Music: Stephen C. Foster

Original Text:

Verse 1: The sun shines bright in the old Kentucky home,
Tis summer, the darkies are gay;
The corn-top's ripe and the meadow's in the bloom,
While the birds make music all the day.
The young folks roll on the little cabin floor,
All merry, all happy and bright;
By 'n' by Hard Times comes a-knocking at the door,
Then my old Kentucky home, goodnight.

Chorus: Weep no more my lady
Oh! weep no more today!
We will sing one song for the old Kentucky home,
For the Old Kentucky Home far away.

Verse 2: They hunt no more for the possum and the coon,
On meadow, the hill and the shore,
They sing no more by the glimmer of the moon,
On the bench by the old cabin door.
The day goes by like a shadow o'er the heart,
With sorrow, where all was delight,
The time has come when the darkies have to part,
Then my old Kentucky home, goodnight.

Chorus

59 This piece was published earlier in January 1853 without a title page. The publication at the end of the month includes the title page and other minor changes. This last version is the one that became popular and used as the state song of Kentucky.
Verse 3: The head must bow and the back will have to bend,  
Wherever the darky may go;  
A few more days, and the trouble all will end,  
In the field where the sugar-canes grow;  
A few more days for to tote the weary load,  
No matter, 'twill never be light;  
A few more days till we totter on the road,  
Then my old Kentucky home, goodnight.

Chorus

Background Information:

This piece has a controversial history. Both the musical inspiration and the composition date of this piece are disputed. Both John Tasker Howard and Ken Emerson have attempted to dissect Foster’s connection with the song based on family letters, Foster’s own manuscripts, and other documents in the states of Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana and Pennsylvania.

Emerson insists that Foster was inspired by Harriet Beecher Stowe’s abolitionist novel *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, and that the song expresses sympathy to slaves. While his biography was written many years before Emerson’s, John Tasker Howard argues against that point, noting that the Foster family as Democrats did not agree or support abolitionist ideals. Ironically, later in Emerson’s book on page 289 he says “Foster had always been a conservative Democrat. No matter how much sympathy his songs had expressed for African Americans, there’s no reason to suppose he did not share Morrison and Henrietta’s views.” From these comments one can assume that while it is unknown

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60 Emerson, 189.
whether Foster agreed with slavery or not, his songs expressed sympathetic feelings toward African Americans.

There is also a controversy over whether the song was written in Bardstown, Kentucky on Federal Hill, or even about Federal Hill at all. There is very little evidence that Stephen ever visited Bardstown, or wrote this song about Federal Hill. There is a possibility that he was in the town briefly in 1852, during the boat trip to the South organized by Dunning; however, there is no evidence that he wrote the song in that town despite the many claims. His sister Charlotte did live there, but she died when he was just a child, and there is no indication that he ever visited her. There is certainty that he had been to the state of Kentucky, particularly Louisville, during the years he spent in Cincinnati. His brother Morrison mentions in his biography that the Rowen family, whose father was the judge on Federal Hill, was in fact related to the eldest William Foster; however, there is no mention of anything in that biography connecting Stephen or the song to Federal Hill. Regardless of all of this controversy, “My Old Kentucky Home, Good-Night” is one of Foster’s most beloved songs, and remains the state song of Kentucky.

The lyrics of this piece were changed from the original version when the Kentucky General Assembly made it the state song. The most notable changes occur in the first verse, as the politically incorrect term “darkies” was changed to “people.”
Performance Considerations:

This song was intended to be sung by a minstrel group, such as the Christy Minstrels, which is why there is a harmonized chorus to be sung after every verse. While the minstrel shows were all about light-hearted entertainment, the quality of their performances was always high. So, the performance of this piece should be taken seriously. Many have performed this song as a solo, omitting the harmonized parts in the chorus and singing the melody only. Like “Open Thy Lattice Love,” this song should be sung as naturally as possible. No modification or excessively rounded vowels are necessary. Because of the slower tempo, there can be a tendency to slow down too much, so it is important not to elongate notes unless for artistic reasons.

Conversely, it should be noted that it is important not to clip the sixteenth notes following dotted eighth notes. Always sing through such phrases, not only to avoid muddy diction, but also to avoid an interrupted melodic line. The motive that is sung to the words “My Old Kentucky Home” containing the notes C-B-C-E-D is important and repeated often. This is one of the few phrases in the song that can be stretched slightly as one sings through the movement from C to E. This puts an emphasis on the word Kentucky. There are other words to this motive in the remaining verses, and the singer can choose whether to apply it to other words.

The fermata found in the solo section at the end of each verse should not be held long. It can be followed with a breath, but the pause between the fermata and the next note should not be a long, dramatic one. A decrescendo at the end of the duration of the
fermata with an easy onset on the next note would be a nice affect if the singer so chooses.

The choral section should be sung sweetly and the person singing the top vocal part should be in charge of leading the group through the fermata, without a breath into the rest of the phrase. Because there is no breath after the fermata, the group as a whole should place a slight accent on the word “far.”

4.7 *Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair*

Publication: June 5, 1854 by Firth, Pond & Co.

Words and Music: Stephen C. Foster

Text:
Verse 1: I dream of Jeanie with the light brown hair, 
Borne, like a vapor, on the summer air; 
I see her tripping where the bright streams play, 
Happy as the daisies that dance on her way. 
Many were the wild notes her merry voice would pour, 
Many were the blithe birds that warbled them o'er: 
Oh! I dream of Jeanie with the light brown hair, 
Floating, like a vapor, on the soft summer air.

Verse 2: I long for Jeanie with the daydawn smile, 
Radiant in gladness, warm with winning guile; 
I hear her melodies, like joys gone by, 
Sighing round my heart o'er the fond hopes that die: 
Sighing like the night wind and sobbing like the rain, 
Wailing for the lost one that comes not again: 
Oh! I long for Jeanie, and my heart bows low, 
Never more to find her where the bright waters flow.

Verse 3: I sigh for Jeanie, but her light form strayed 
Far from the fond hearts round her native glade; 
Her smiles have vanished and her sweet songs flown, 
Flitting like the dreams that have cheered us and gone. 
Now the nodding wild flowers may wither on the shore
While her gentle fingers will cull them no more:
Oh! I sigh for Jeanie with the light brown hair,
Floating, like a vapor, on the soft summer air.

Background Information:

This piece was written about Foster’s wife, Jane. His sketchbook indicates that “Jennie” was a nickname for his wife, but the spelling was changed to “Jeanie” for its final publication. This is one of several songs that Foster wrote showing affection for his wife. Like many of his pieces, “Jeanie” did not become popular until years after Foster’s death. The original non-published version of this piece indicated that Jennie was dead. The text read “I long for Jennie but her form lies low.” That eventually changed, making it into a song of sweet longing.

Performance Considerations:

There are a variety of performances by singers of different genres available for study. Most of these performers have interpreted the song in a variety of ways. It is important for the singer who attempts any of Foster’s pieces to be artistic within reason. While the folk song tradition is to adapt any song to fit circumstances, it is not the tradition to completely alter the rhythmic or melodic line so that the song loses its original melody and phrasing. With that said, the suggestions about to be mentioned may differ somewhat from many of the recordings in existence. I happen to believe that Foster’s piece is beautiful just as its written, but others may adjust it to fit a variety of styles.
Many of the phrases in this piece begin with an eighth note pick-up at the end of a measure. Because of this, it is necessary to slightly prolong the pick-ups to indicate the beginning of the phrase. The exact length of those notes should be the performer’s decision, but there should be caution in making any of them too long. While there are a few large leaps in specific phrases throughout the piece, the melody is mostly conjunct. Because of this, compression should be applied to all phrases descending down the scale stepwise. Likewise, compression should occur on phrases ascending up the scale until the singer reaches the highest note, which should receive a slight prolongation. This not only keeps the piece from becoming too slow, but it also applies correct declamation of the text.

This type of compression is seen at the beginning of the song on the text “I dream of Jeanie with the light, brown hair, Borne, like a vapor, on the summer air.” Compression should occur on the descending phrase of “Jeanie with the” and then again on the ascending phrase “Borne, like a.” A stretch occurs on the first syllable of “vapor” because it is the melodic peak of the phrase, but compression should immediately return on the text” on the summer air.” The remainder of the song can be sung as such, but the second verse should avoid excessive stretching and move along as normal. Artistic decisions should be made so that each verse sounds somewhat different.

Foster indicates an eighth rest near the beginning of each verse, interrupting the first phrase of text. Most performers choose to almost eliminate it, although Foster obviously put it there for a reason, proper interpretation would be to treat it as a lift, but

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61 Text declamation is the normal speech flow pattern of a sentence when spoken.
not a breath. Another interesting part of this piece occurs near the end of each verse. Foster connects the verse to the reprise of the first phrase with an ad lib voicing beginning on a middle C on the word “Oh!” Although he dictates a small cadenza in the score, it is clear that Foster is indifferent to whatever the singer chooses do between those two notes. Performance practice over the years has been to merely sing the middle C to connect to the beginning of the next phrase without a breath. Some have chosen to crescendo from one note to the next, others add an ascending portamento. The most popular technique is to add a decrescendo, making the upper note soft and warm.

4.8 **Beautiful Dreamer**

Published: March 10, 1864 by Firth, Pond & Co.

Words and Music: Stephen C. Foster

Text:
Verse 1: Beautiful dreamer, wake unto me,
Starlight and dewdrops are waiting for thee;
Sounds of the rude world, heard in the day,
Lull'd by the moonlight have all pass'd away!
Beautiful dreamer, queen of my song,
List while I woo thee with soft melody;
Gone are the cares of life's busy throng,
Beautiful dreamer, awake unto me!
Beautiful dreamer, awake unto me!

Verse 2: Beautiful dreamer, out on the sea
Mermaids are chanting the wild lorelie;
Over the streamlet vapors are borne,
Waiting to fade at the bright coming morn.
Beautiful dreamer, beam on my heart,
E'en as the morn on the streamlet and sea;
Then will all clouds of sorrow depart,
Beautiful dreamer, awake unto me!
Beautiful dreamer, awake unto me!
Background Information:

This piece was written in 1862, yet was refused publication by Firth, Pond & Co. until after his death in 1864. Firth and Pond inaccurately noted on the cover that it was “the last song ever written…composed but a few days previous to his death.” This is not true, and this statement seemed to be an exploitation of his death in order for the company to make a profit. “Beautiful Dreamer,” like many other of Foster’s later works, is a ballad. While this piece did not outsell many of his minstrel songs, some believe that it is a culmination of all that he achieved in his musical career.

The imagery in this piece is vivid and luring, which is appropriate for a serenade. The arpeggiated piano accompaniment, similar to that found in bel canto opera, also plays into the hypnotic, yet peaceful effect of this piece. Ken Emerson describes this piece in his biography as “a siren song beckoning its singer not to dash against the rocks, but to melt into the sea of its own melody.”

Performance Considerations:

This song is specifically stated as a “serenade” underneath the title in the inside cover of the sheet music. Because of the lullaby-like nature of this piece, one should be careful not to over sing, yet not to let it get to soft or too slow. As in other Foster songs, the singer should sing with his/her natural voice. “Beautiful Dreamer” is written in compound meter to enhance the rocking motion of a lullaby. The tempo should hardly waver from moderato; characterizing the steady rock that puts a baby to sleep. The only

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62 Emerson, 280.
63 Ibid.,
place that the singer can choose to alter the tempo slightly is at the end of each verse and on the first note of a large ascending leap.

The text is important in this piece. While overly abrupt consonants should be avoided, all consonants on words appearing on the down beat should be lengthened as means of expression. In the same regard, the text should not cause the tempo to slow down, but should instead enforce the continuous, unaltering tempo.

An important part of this piece is the appoggiatura in the last line. This should be placed slightly before the beat, slightly accented and prolonged. This was the practice of operatic composer, Gaetano Donizetti, whose style can be seen as an influence in many of Foster’s later pieces.
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